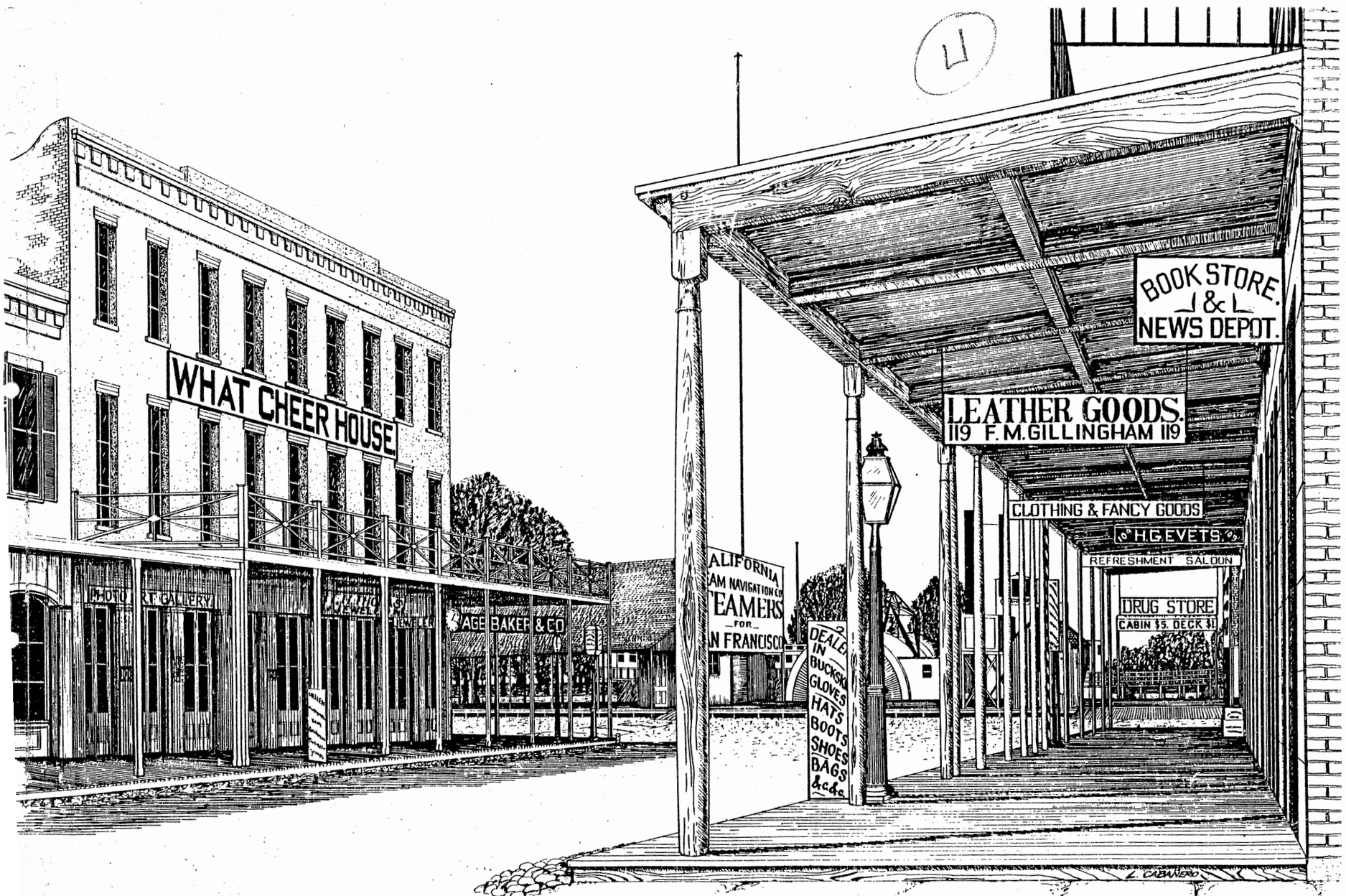

A GUIDELINE FOR SIGNS.

OLD SACRAMENTO HISTORIC DISTRICT.

SIGN DESIGNER & FABRICATOR'S EDITION

A GUIDELINE FOR SIGNS

Street Addresses and Sign Lighting

OLD SACRAMENTO HISTORIC DISTRICT

1849 - 1875

Sign Designer and Fabricator's Edition

City of Sacramento

July 1983

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Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 82-71585

PREFACE

Old Sacramento has become one of the most significant historic restoration projects in the nation. It not only preserves the rich heritage of California's early history for future generations, but also adds to the cultural and economic vitality of the City of Sacramento.

Sacramento is fortunate in having many of its early buildings still standing. Structures along the Sacramento River mark the landing places for prospectors and goods destined for the northern mining district during the '49 Gold Rush. From its beginning, Sacramento was the hub for all commercial, social and political activities for Central California. This pivotal role continued through the Nevada mining boom of the late 1850's and later in the 1860's as the terminus and major supply point for the first transcontinental railroad.

A substantial percentage of Sacramento's central business district between the years 1849 and 1875 is represented in the Historic District. Leading banks, the finest hotels, and offices for the railroad, steamboat and stage companies were located here, in the financial center and industrial heart of the community.

Public awareness of the need to preserve at least some of the more significant 19th Century structures was aroused in the early 1950's. Redevelopment of the central city, during the early 60's, established over three blocks of the old riverfront section of the city as an historic area. By the early 1970's, the Old Sacramento Historic District had become the focal point and symbol of the revitalization of downtown Sacramento.

The primary purpose of this manual is to assist developers, merchants, and occupants of Old Sacramento in preserving the historic character of the area.

Presented here are authenticated advertising and design details of the 19th Century for exterior signs, sign lighting and street addressing which can be used in the Historic District. While it is realized that no study of exterior advertising can be considered exhaustive, it is felt that sufficient information on historic sign types and their design characteristics has been uncovered to guarantee that authentic signs can be replicated if the guidelines are followed closely.

This handbook supersedes an earlier sign manual and is a comprehensive guide based, in part, on actual working experience with tenants of the District. It is a practical guide, addressing many questions pertaining to 19th Century advertising as well as the limitations on sign construction and installation required by today's safety standards. Wherever possible, technical terminology has been simplified.

For economy and added convenience, two versions of A GUIDELINE FOR SIGNS have been produced. A shortened version for District tenant's subtitled MERCHANT'S EDITION and the complete guidelines for those individuals or companies actually constructing signs entitled Sign Designer and Fabricator's Edition. Potential tenants of the Historic District should pay particular attention to sections of this document entitled THE COMMUNICATED MESSAGE and TYPICAL SIGN TYPES. Sign companies doing business in Old Sacramento are required to have a thorough understanding of all guidelines.

Equivalent page numbers in the Merchants's Edition are shown near the lower bound margin in brackets [ ]

[iv]

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I. INTRODUCTION

In order to accurately recapture the ambience of California's capital city during the third quarter of the 19th Century, Old Sacramento businesses must adopt advertising techniques and images from that period.

Almost all cities in the United States had similar kinds of signs during that era. In general, sign artists, writers and designers followed identical design principles in Sacramento as elsewhere, and research for this manual and the examples shown has been drawn from cities and towns throughout the United States. Special attention, however, is given to documenting the chronology of style change of sign elements in Sacramento.

19th Century businesses projected their advertising to reflect the traditional, accepted image of their enterprises. Businesses could be recognized by an expected "look", an almost subliminal form of advertising.

In many ways, exterior signs were a contradiction of their surroundings. Architecture popular during the time, was a revival of sophisticated classical styles of the old world. Signs, on the other hand, could best be characterized as bold--often overshadowing the architecture and the street scene.

The following guidelines outline and illustrate the correct sign features for historic period 1849-1875. Wherever possible, elements of design and layout should be copied exactly as portrayed in the guidelines.

All modern-use commercial signs within the Old Sacramento District should appropiately reflect the historic period's sign design principles and practices, including: sign type, location, shape, size, design, layout, the use of historic typefaces, graphic symbolism, color and construction detail.

This manual covers only permanent types of advertising and not the detailed information pertaining to broadsides and temporary paper, glass, canvas, wood or other short-term historic types of signs. Signs, street addresses and sign illumination should follow mainstream styles typical of the interpretive period Extremes in design should be avoided. Symbols are given to assist sign designers and District tenant in this goal. In the text, a (C) denotes very common, (R) very rare, and the absence of a symbol indicates neither extreme. The majority of sign types installed in the District should be in the (C) classification. In Section V, TYPICAL SIGN TYPES, an additional indication is given as to the maximum number of some sign types which should be present at one time in the District: (R-#). Some sign formats were historically rare and therfore should be avoided today as well. (X) denotes an unacceptable and incorrect element of sign design.

Questions or problems concerning sign regulations should be directed to the Sacramento Museum and History Division of the Department of Community Services, 1930 J Street, Sacramento, California 95814, (916) 447-2958

KEY TO SYMBOLS USED TO INDICATE THE FREQUENCY OF OCCURRENCE OF ELEMENTS OF SIGN DESIGN, SIGN TYPE, STREET ADDRESS OR SIGN LIGHTING

(C) Historically very common. Prevalant element of sign design or sign type. It should be noted that rules for designing signs were never rigidly absolute. Variations did occur. However, sign painters who deviated from the unwritten laws risked criticism. Most strove to stay within the stylistic bounds of their day. Merchants also attempted to stay within the accepted advertising limits.

(R) Rare and restricted element of sign design These sign characteristics should, in general, be avoided.

(R-3) Rare sign type. A maximum of 3 signs (example shown) of this type should be present at any time in the Historic District.

( ) The absence of symbols indicates neither very common nor rare.

(X) An unacceptable or incorrect sign detail.

II. PURPOSE OF SIGN GUIDELINES

The purposes for the sign guidelines outlined in this manual are to:

- Encourage signs which, by their design, integrate and harmonize with the buildings and sites they occupy, while eliminating excessive and confusing sign displays.
- Preserve and improve the historic ambience of the Old Sacramento Historic District as a place to live and work, and to make it an attraction for non-residents who come to visit or trade.
- Safeguard and enhance property values.
- Protect public and private investment in buildings and open spaces.
- Eliminate potential hazards to pedestrians.

III. OLD SACRAMENTO SIGN GUIDELINES

A. DEFINITION OF A SIGN

A sign includes any symbol, device, image, poster, flag, banner, billboard, design or directional indicator used for advertising purposes; whether painted, attached, erected or otherwise maintained on any premise; containing any words, letters or part of letters, figures, numerals, phrases, sentences, emblems, devices, trade names, or trademarks; anything which is used to designate an individual, firm, association, corporation, profession, business, street address, commodity, or product; and is visible within the Old Sacramento District.

Furthermore, the definition of a sign is expanded to include all necessary appurtenances for a sign to function, including, for example, sign support hardware, flagpoles and lighting.

The sign regulations are to be rigorously enforced for the following signs: 1) All exterior signs which occur within the boundaries of the Historic District. 2) Interior signs, visible from the exterior of a building, occurring within the space delimited by the inside face of an exterior wall and the exterior surface of that wall. This includes all signs painted on windows and glass doors and signs placed directly behind glazed portions of exterior walls. The intent of the sign regulations is to encourage interior signs which maintain the historic character of the District when viewed from the street.

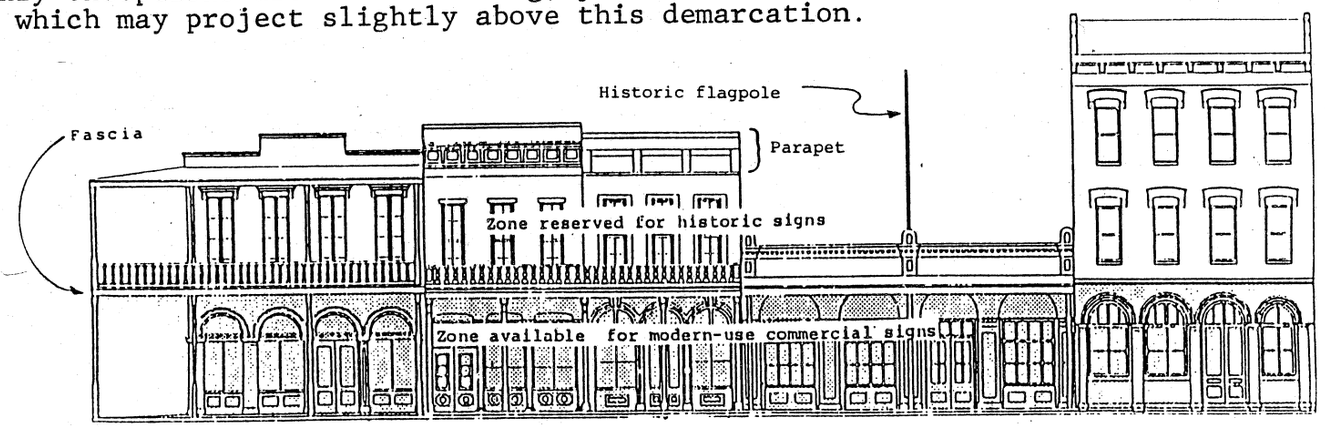
B. LIMITS ON SIGN LOCATIONS

Within the Old Sacramento Historic District, signs have been divided into two groups--historic and modern use commercial. In order to preserve the original historic character of the buildings, many historic signs are being restored to their original locations and standards are established for the number and potential mounting locations of new, modern-use commercial signs. Building exteriors should not be overwhelmed with signs.

All space above and including the fascia (see diagram) of the first floor canopy structure to the top of a building's parapet is reserved exclusively for historic signs. Historic signs are defined as advertisements and building identifications which were located on specific buildings during the interpretive period (1849-1875). These are verifiable and can be found in historic photographs and drawings of the same period. These signs are considered part of the fixed historic architecture. (see Appendix C on page 304 for a complete list of Historic Signs)

All modern-use commercial signs on the front of the buildings within the District are to be confined between the underside of the canopy structure and the top of the wooden sidewalk. (On some structures, this upper boundary is an imaginary line drawn between the first and second floor windows or door openings.) The only exceptions are free-standing, pole-mounted signs which may project slightly above this demarcation.

Rear wall and alley modern use commercial signs are restricted to the street floor and basement levels of Historic District buildings. The lower grade in the alley, in effect, allows modern-use commercial signs to be installed on the two lower levels of most buildings.



Building with a second-floor balcony and canopy | Buildings with second-floor balconies | Building with a canopy | Building without a canopy.

A typical streetscape in the Old Sacramento Historic District. The shaded area indicates the zone available for modern-use commercial signs.

IV. ELEMENTS OF 19TH CENTURY SIGNS

The following elements of design are common to exterior advertising for the years 1849 through 1875. Exterior signs should follow these design principles to produce signs representative of the time span of the District.

A. THE COMMUNICATED MESSAGE

Merchants must use brief and direct painted words on their signs communicating products or services offered for sale. There should be little question about the line of merchandise a firm sells based upon its signs. To "individualize" a business identity, entrepreneurs may use their own name or an historically appropriate fictitious surname as part of the business' title. Exterior signs may emphasize the owner's surname more than products, once a firm has been established.

Historically (unlike the current advertising trend) colorful or fictitious business titles were restricted to specific groups of enterprises. These included primarily, saloons, restaurants and hotels. Accordingly, fictitious business names today should only be used by these same businesses.

Generic product symbols and product displays can be used by specific groups of businesses. However, Logos should not be used on exterior signs (see Logos).

THE COMMUNICATED MESSAGE outlines correct methods for using written words, language, logo substitutes, product symbols and displays in exterior advertising.

I. WRITTEN WORDS

a. Historically, a sign's message was almost always totally composed of lettering. Graphics were relatively rare, on exterior signs.

b. Most signs advertised a single building tenant or enterprise. Joint signs, advertising more than one business, were rare. Directories on the exteriors, were also not common.

c. Straight-forward sign copy-relaying product, service and ownership [the name(s) of the owner(s)] information-was the most popular format for retail, wholesale and manufacturing enterprises. Only rarely, was a thematic, non-product, service or ownership oriented word used for advertising these business types.

(1) A sign's message could:
   (a) Be limited to:
      1) Product information. Examples: HARDWARE.; CARPETS & OIL CLOTHS.
      2) Service Information. Examples: FIRE & MARINE INSURANCE AGENCY.; DENTIST.
      3) Ownership informantion. Examples: M. FRANK.; H.R. COVEY & CO.

   (b) Advertise both ownership and product or services being offered. Example: GRAHAM'S DRUG STORE.; PAGE, BACON & CO. BANKERS.

   (c) A business might use a series of two or more signs to convey its complete advertising message. One sign might contain only proprietary information. Others, the products or services being offered.

(2) If an owner's name was included in a sign, one of the following was most likely true:
   (a) Only the last name was used. Example: SMITH.
   (b) The last name was utilized, preceded by

one or two initials. Example: R. SMITH. or R.H. SMITH.

(c) The last name was followed by an apostrophe ('s). Example: SMITH'S.

(d) In a partnership, two last names were used with an ampersand (&) joining them. Example: SMITH & JONES.

(e) In a partnership, a last name with or without preceding initial(s) followed by "and Company" usually abbreviated (& Co.), or "and Brother(s)" normally shortened to (& BRO. or BROS.) Example: SMITH & CO.; R.SMITH & CO.; SMITH, JONES & CO.; SMITH & BRO.(BROS.)

(f) If a woman owned a business, "Mrs." sometimes preceded (a), (b), (c) or (e) above, whether or not the owner was married. During the 19th Century, the use of the prefix "Mrs." was different than today. It not only indicated a married female but also any woman who had reached adulthood. This designation was a traditional European (German) symbol of maturity and respect. Example: MRS. SMITH; MRS. SMITH & CO.

(3) A business often emphasized whether it was a wholesaler, retailer, importer, manufacturer, agent or jobber.

(4) The phrase "DEALER IN..." was commonly incorporated into a sign's text.

(5) News, tobacco merchants, hide dealers and occasionally other businesses sometimes use the concluding word "DEPOT".

(6) Exterior signs often used short connective words including: FOR, TO, AND, BY, IN, OF.

(7) The conjunction "and" was commonly replaced by an ampersand (&).

(8) At the conclusion of a sign message listing products, an abbreviation for "et cetera" was frequently used. This was especially common on wall-mounted

signs. During the historic period, "& c." was used as an abbreviation for "et cetera". Often two of these symbol combinations were used in succession - "& c. & c." The "c" was most commonly a lower case letter. The paired abbreviation "Etc. Etc." was also used on occasion.

(9) Descriptive words or brief statements on wall-mounted signs were occasionally used to indicate the quality of merchandise a business was selling; the quality of service that was being offered; the selection of goods on hand; or the degree of expertise an owner had in a particular field. Examples of the types of words and phrases used historically are:

FANCY.....
FINE.....
LOW PRICES.
HONEST GOODS.
CELEBRATED.
ALL SIZES.
EVERY STYLE.
SUCCESSORS TO..
ONE PRICE ONLY.
WARRANTED THE BEST.
EVERYTHING FIRST CLASS.
OF THE LATEST STYLE.
AT THE LOWEST RATES (OR PRICES).
MADE AT THE SHORTEST NOTICE.
EXECUTED WITH NEATNESS AND DISPATCH.
CAREFULLY REPAIRED. (AND WARRANTED).
PARTICULAR ATTENTION PAID (GIVEN TO).
WILL BE ATTENDED TO AT THE SHORTEST NOTICE.
ALL ORDERS PROMPTLY EXECUTED.
EXCELS ALL OTHERS.
UNEQUALED IN THE WORLD.
GUARANTEED OR MONEY RETURNED.
SALE AGENTS IN CALIFORNIA.
FOR SALE HERE ONLY.
GENERAL AGENTS.
CONSTANTLY ON HAND.
A FULL ASSORTMENT.
EVERY DESCRIPTION.
MADE TO ORDER.
TRIMMED TO ORDER.

d. Saloons, hotels (houses), restaurants, stables, newspapers, and theaters regularly used a thematic approach in their advertising. These words often reflected a

geographic, democratic, ethnic, patriotic, picturesque or romantic idea of the time. For other types of businesses, however, the thematic approach was used very rarely. Popular thematic words were used by themselves or preceded the actual business type of these exterior signs; i.e., PIONEER SALOON, GOLDEN EAGLE or GOLDEN EAGLE HOTEL, etc. In Sacramento, theme words include:

PIONEER	CHICAGO	ALTA
(GOLDEN) EAGLE	SUTTER	ALHAMBRA
UNION	LAKE	CONCERT
O.K.	STAR	GLOBE
CALIFORNIA	TEHAMA	IDAHO
SACRAMENTO	METROPOLITAN	WESTERN
MINER'S	CINCINNATI	FLORENCE
YOLO	EUREKA	GRAND
NEW ENGLAND	MECHANIC'S	DEMOCRATIC
PEOPLE'S	UNITED STATES(U.S.)	EASTERN
AMERICAN	NEW YORK	FRENCH (DE FRANCE)
BOSTON	(NEW) ORLEANS	DE PARIS
CITY	ARCADE	PACIFIC
CLIPPER	CAPITOL	EMPIRE
MARYSVILLE	UNIVERSAL	PHOENIX
STATE	EL DORADO	CENTRAL
VERANDAH	CHEAP JOHN (An exception used only for a retail store)	

In addition, saloons and restaurants had the following legends:

OUR HOUSE	DIANA	OUR HOME
OUR CORNER	FASHION	HEADQUARTERS
HOLE IN THE WALL	GEM	BLUE WING
LOUISIANA	MAGNOLIA	ELEPHANT

e. It should be noted the word "EXCHANGE" could often be found used in association with banks and saloons.

f. The street address was often incorporated into the

design of an exterior sign, see section entitled STREET NUMBERS ON SIGNS, on page 101 for details.

(1) Occasionally, if a business occupied a location other than the street level of a building, an indication was given as to its location. Appropriate phrases include "Above...store", "2nd STORY", "UPSTAIRS", or "ROOM (NO.)..." This message was usually scaled down in size from the rest of the sign's text. The location statement could also be encircled by a decorative design to set it off on the sign. See page 43 for an example.

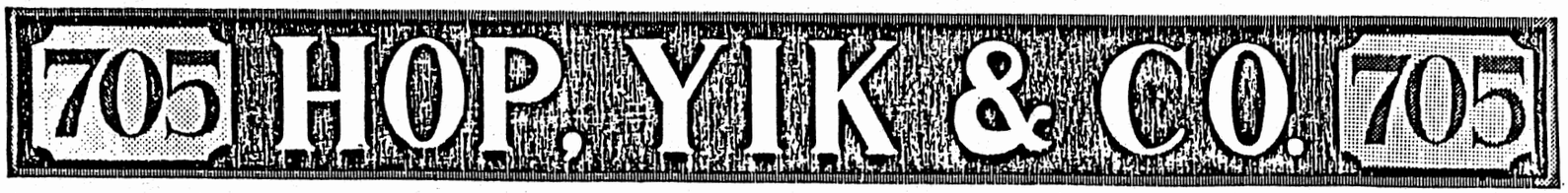
g. The following are the principal advertising messages found on historic exterior signs. These sign texts were copied directly from photographs dating from the years 1849-75.

HARDWARE.
PAINTING.
CATHOLIC BOOKS.
CLOTHING.
CLOTHING WAREHOUSE.
ALE HOUSE.
SALOON.
DR. BURBANK, DENTIST.
DAVIS & SEGER.
STORAGE.
J. GRIFFITH.
SUTTER IRON WORKS.
BANKING HOUSE.
SABATIE & MAUBEC.
BAR FIXTURES.
TAPPAN & CO.
PACIFIC HOUSE.
GENERAL MERCHANDISE.
DRUGS.
BOOKS & STATIONERY.
WOOLE'S SHIRT DEPOT.
POST OFFICE.

ASSAY OFFICE.
CLOAK, BONNET & FANCY GOODS.
STAGE OFFICE.
DAGUERREAN GALLERY.
GAS FITTING.
DUNCAN & CO.
ATLANTIC & EUROPEAN EXPRESS.
Wm. T. COLEMAN & CO.
DR. PROVOST.
UNION SALOON.
ORLEANS HOTEL.
WARM & COLD BATHS.
D.L. ROSS.
NEWS DEPOT.
BOOK STORE.
MILLINERY.
REFRESHMENT.
CRAWFORD HOUSE.
ATLANTIC EXCHANGE.
METROPOLITAN BATHS.

WASHING AND IRONING.
LITERARY DEPOT.
CLOTHING, DRY GOODS, BOOTS & SHOES.
SMITH & PORTER'S COFFEE HOUSE.
YEE WA LEE. CALIFORNIA LAUNDRY.
JOHNSON'S CONFECTIONARY & BAKERY.
H.J. BRENDLINGER. TOBACCO & CIGARS.
CHAMBERLAIN'S AMBROTYPE & PHOTOGRAPHIC GALLERY.
BAKERY, BOOTS, SHOES, LEATHER & FINDINGS.
CROOKS, SPERM & POLAR OIL, CHANDELIER & LAMP
STORE.
MCCOLGAN & O'KANE. SADDLES AND HARNESS.
R.S.MAYEN. ATTORNEY AT LAW.
FANCY STORE, TOYS WHOLESALE.
SHOE & RUBBER WAREHOUSE.
LEVI ELDRIDGE'S CARPET STORE. one door above.
T.N. & C.W. TOWN. BOOK & JOB PRINTING.
HAT, CLOTHING, BOOTS & SHOES.
GROCERIES & LIQUOR. L.F. BARTELS & CO.
DRUGS, PAINTS, OILS, GLASS, FANCY GOODS.
MEDICINES, FANCY GOODS AND TOILET ARTICLES.
WELLS, FARGO & CO. EXPRESS OFFICE.
CHA'S FEESS. DEALER IN CIGARS AND TOBACCO.
J. SAMUEL. MERCHANT TAILOR, CUTTING, CLEANING
& REPAIRING DONE TO ORDER.
HARDWARE, STOVES, CHEMICALS, PAINTS, OILS,
GLASS, FANCY GOODS.
REED & CO. 117 PHOTOGRAPHERS.

Source: See Bibliography;
Also Sacramento
City Directories 1850-1875



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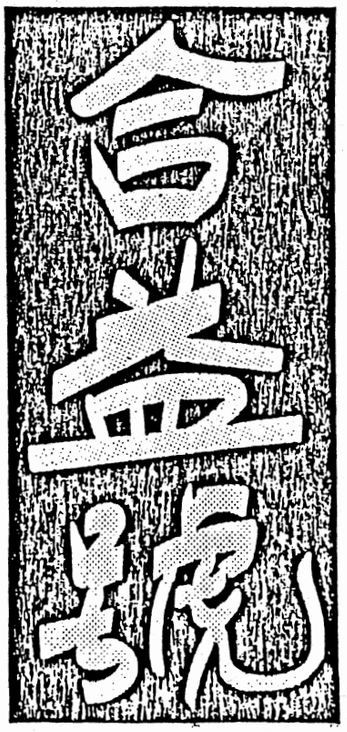
2. LANGUAGE

Historically, the majority of sign texts in the Old Sacramento District, were written in the English language. However, some foreign languages, including German, French, Spanish and Chinese, were used occasionally. The text of these messages were almost always duplicated elsewhere on the exterior of the building in English. Signs incorporating foreign languages were otherwise identical in design and construction to signs shown in this manual.

Illustrated above and to the right are typical sign combinations using two languages for advertising. Except for the street number (705), both signs repeat the same text, in different languages.



3. LOGOS

Logos are not permitted on exterior signs. Logos, unusual sign formats, unique emblems and insignias were not common and even rarer in exterior advertising from the interpretive period. Merchants of the period strove to stay within the bounds of the popularly accepted advertising idiosyncracies of their era which did not include the use of logos. Logos will not be permitted on today's modern-use signs in order to recapture this aspect of advertising.

A standardized system for product and service symbols was occasionally incorporated into a sign's design during the historic period. These symbols, however, were not treated as logos. See PRODUCT SYMBOLS AND DISPLAYS section on page 21.

If a more modern, unified image in advertising is desired by a building tenant within the Historic District, an approved exterior sign, with text totally composed of words, could readily set that image, being repeated in business cards, stationary, bags, etc. A word of caution--the format in which a sign text is presented was never considered very important during the historic period. A sign's location on a building facade determined the sign type and sign board shape which was adopted. Therefore, if an exterior sign design is adopted as a business symbol, it may be limited in its exterior use. See Section V, TYPICAL SIGN TYPES, beginning on page 123.

An exterior sign printed on business cards, stationary, paper bags, etc., may serve the function of a logo.

4. PRODUCT SYMBOLS AND DISPLAYS

Most exterior signs used simple, straight-forward advertising of written words to convey their messages. For some businesses, however, specialized symbols became synonymous with particular enterprises. The mortar and pestle, for example, is probably familiar to everyone as an advertisement for drug stores.

In addition to symbols, some businesses commonly used displays of products sold by the establishment as a means for advertising. It was not uncommon for a store specializing in men's clothing to display men's coats or shirts outdoors near the entrance of the business.

Some business types used both product displays and symbols for advertising. An example is men's footwear-a business which commonly used the boot for product symbol and for product display.

Product symbols and displays acted as supplements to more conventional signs. Not every merchant involved in trades traditionally designated by symbols or displays, used them. Many businesses operated without these additional advertisements.

PRODUCT SYMBOLS

During the era reflected by the Old Sacramento Historic District, graphics on exterior signs were product, service, or trade oriented-directly illustrating the goods or services offered by the establishment. These symbols should not be considered logos because of their generic use. More than one business on a city block could utilize the identical symbol. Product symbols were finite in number and very standardized throughout the country. It should be emphasized that during the 19th Century, a majority of business types did not use product symbols for advertising.

Symbolic representation of word elements on a sign other than for a particular product or service, were rare. One might consider the elephant, a common mining or boom town saloon name and graphic image, to be a contradiction to this general rule. However, this symbol relates to "Seeing the Elephant", a popular 19th Century folk theme, universally understood to mean saloon when displayed as a symbol.

Seventeeth and Eighteenth Century European and Colonial American heraldic or symbolic signs (using animals or other caricatures) were extremely rare. During the research for this manual, no examples were discovered to have been used historically in Old Sacramento.

Product symbols were, principally, oriented toward attracting business off the street--not sidewalk foot traffic. Many symbols were made larger than life-size, and were displayed between the top of the building and the first floor canopy structure. Rarely were these symbols used below a first floor canopy. Because of the restrictions placed on the location of modern-use commercial signs, the predominant mode for product symbol presentation will be via pole-mounted installations wherever sidewalks have weather protection.

Generally, product symbols were displayed alone. Much less commonly, they were combined into one of the more conventional sign formats illustrated in this manual. Many of these symbols were constructed of wood and sheet metal as three-dimensional objects. Others were painted on flat wooden boards in a manner which gave them the appearance of having depth and dimension. Some flat boards were also cut-out into the shape of a product symbol. A range of minor variations occurred in the actual design of the symbols. As stated, most of them were oversized. (See illustrations and accompanying dimensions in Appendix B.)

Realistic color representations of products-not abstract, stylized drawings-should be used in reproducing 19th Century product symbols. Modern graphic production techniques such as air brushing or silk screens are to be discouraged. (Note that in order to facilitate printing of this manual, product sumbol illustrations have been simplified.)

The symbols listed are typical of those found in an inland city of medium size, such as Sacramento. Other larger, coastal cities would have had additional symbols because of their size and location. These would include symbols for the sale of navigation instruments and fresh fish.

Some of the listed symbols are no longer applicable to modern commercial development within the Old Sacramento District. The complete list is shown only to make this section comprehensive.

PRODUCT DISPLAYS

Direct display of goods for sale was another method used to advertise certain types of businesses. Many did not use this sales technique, however. In 1850, Sacramento passed ordinances forbidding the sale and storage of goods on the sidewalk. This space did not belong to the store owner, but rather to the city. Sacramento, like most other cities, however, was never able to completely abate this form of advertising. It also must not be forgotten that the original street surfaces were dirt, and goods displayed outdoors were subject to soilage. Vandalism and theft were also potential concerns during the past, as today. Consequently, heavy, durable goods, such as large pieces of hardware, were the most commonly displayed product outdoors. Light-weight, low-value goods, which included tinware and small brooms, were often tied or wired together as "display strings" hung from a

nail or wooden peg on a canopy column or on a building face. Most businesses dealing in "high class" or valuable merchandise, displayed their wares indoors and/or in display windows.

The introduction of product displays as an accepted method of advertising for current tenants of the Historic District raises a major concern. Many items sold today were not available during the historic interpretive period of the District and outdoor displays of such items as plastic toys, automobiles and airplanes would be disruptive to the District's goal of recreating the historic character of the 1849-1875 period. Consequently, only materials available during the interpretive era of the District, as outlined in the text, will be permitted for outdoor advertising.

The following list indicates the appropriate symbols and product displays used in Old Sacramento in the period 1849-75. Appendix B, beginning on page 259, illustrates the symbols and displays and also indicates suitable locations for this type of advertising. Product symbols and displays will be restricted to those listed and to the locations shown on the facade section diagrams in Appendix B. Symbols and displays will only be permitted when they are representative of the business type that the symbol and displays typified historically.

BUSINESS TYPE	SYMBOL OR DISPLAY	PAGE
Pharmacist	Mortar with Pestle	260
Tailor	Men's Coat or Shirt	262
Boot/Shoe Dealer	Men's Boot	264
Saloon/Auction House	Elephant*	265
Broom Maker/Dealer	Broom and Brushes	266
Barbershop	Barber Pole	267
Watchmaker/Jeweler	Pocket Watch	270
Optician	Eye Glasses	272
Photographer	Camera/Photographs	273
Saloon: China Dealer	Pitcher	276
Carpet Dealer	Rugs	277
Hardware Dealer	Agriculture Implements/Hardware	279
Hotels, Theaters, Saloon, Billiards	Special Gas Lamp	294
Stable	Horse	281
Tack and Harness Shop	Saddle	283
Cooper	Barrel	284
Book and Stationary Store	Book	285
Haberdasher	Top Hat	286
Gunsmith	Rifle	282
Cigar Dealer	Wooden Indian	287
Tinsmith	Tinware	288

* One of the few saloon themes illustrated by a graphic image

BUSINESS TYPE	SYMBOL OR DISPLAY	PAGE
Leather Goods	Glove	289
Meat Store	Steer	290
Stage Office	Stage Coach	292
Hotel	Inn Shaped Sign	296
Newspaper/Post Office	Writing Desk	297
Furniture	Furniture	298
Sewing Machines	Sewing Machine	301
Fresh Produce	Fruit and Vegetables	299
Stone Cutter	Stone Monuments	300
Perfume/Lamp Oil	Whale or Pig	301
Fire Department	Fire Fighting Equipment	301
Hospitality**	Deer or Elks Horns	301
Theater	Billboard	301
Hotel, Public Structure, Signaling	Flagpole	301
Dry Goods	Blankets	301
Star Theme Businessess**	Five Pointed Star	—
Wood Carver	Carved Wood Signs	301
Eagle or "American" Business Themes**	Eagle or federal shield	—
Direction**	Human Hand	302

** Universal symbols not restricted to specific business types

B. DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

Once a business' basic advertising message has been determined, specific rules must be followed in selecting an appropriate signboard size and shape. In addition, the placement of the individual words on the sign is crucial to the historic believability of the advertisement.

Most signs used a horizontally rectangular format. The appropiate size of the sign was often determined by its placement on a facade. As an example, signs used over the boardwalk spanned the walkway. An inverse rule directed the relationship between the size of a sign and the number of words used on the advertisement. Large signs use few words.

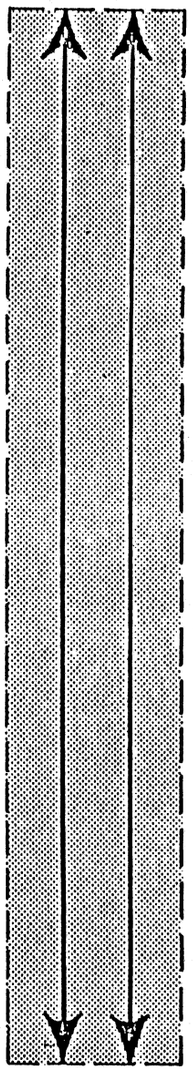
A distinctive characteristic of most advertising in the 19th Century, was the total use of available space on the signboard. Sign copy filled all the space. This was achieved by changing the scale of type and by curving words.

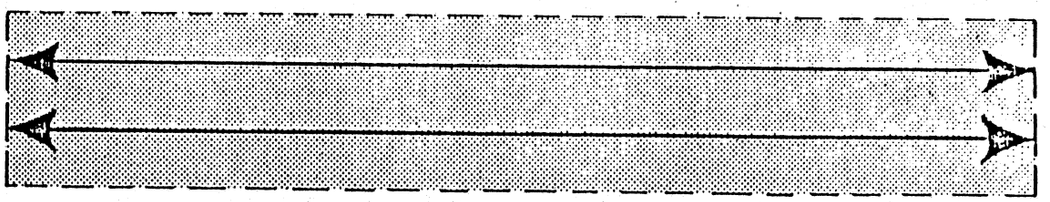
Additionally, two historic design idiosyncrasies need to be followed for accurate, period advertising. Signs must use a different type style for each line of text and sign layouts must be visually balanced.

The DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS section details the rules for selecting appropriate signboard shapes, signboard sizes, creating typeface variety, balancing word layouts, filling space and developing correct word patterns.

1. SIGNBOARD SHAPES

Illustrated below and to the left, are the two basic sign shapes which should be used for a majority of signs developed by Old Sacramento businesses.





Today's signs are to reflect the historic period represented by the building's architecture.

a. Most signs were rectangular in shape.

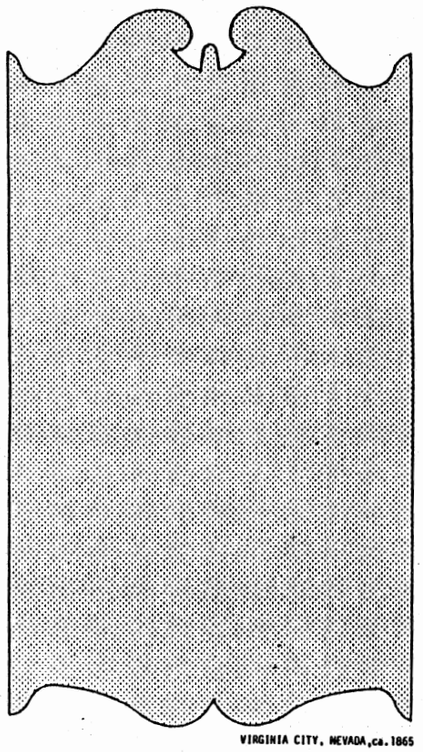
b. The exaggeration of a sign in one dimension was often carried to extremes.

c. Square formats (equal height and width) were not common except for particular flat and projecting wall-mounted signs discussed on page 160.

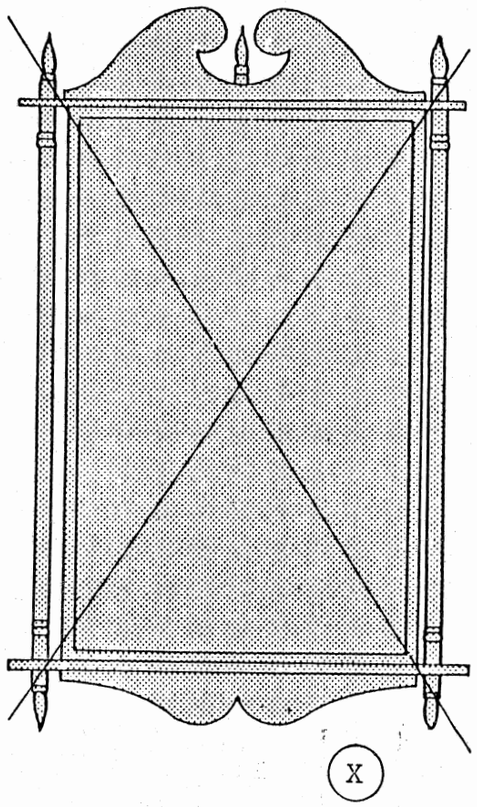
d. Diamond and oval-shaped signs are known to have existed, but were relatively rare. Oval-shaped signs, when present, were always small (less than two feet wide.)

e. There is no historic evidence for large circular-shaped signs. The closest approximation to the circular shape is the combination of a conventional horizontal rectangular sign with an arched or semi-circular cap. See page 140 for an example.

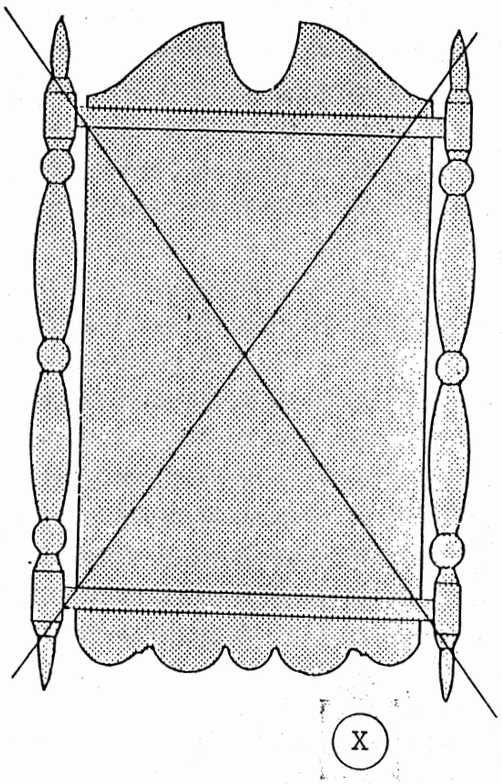
f. Rectangular signs with ornate top and bottom designs were sometimes executed in a simplified American Colonial format. The top outline of these signs were sometimes described as having a broken or swan's neck silhouette.



Acceptable



X

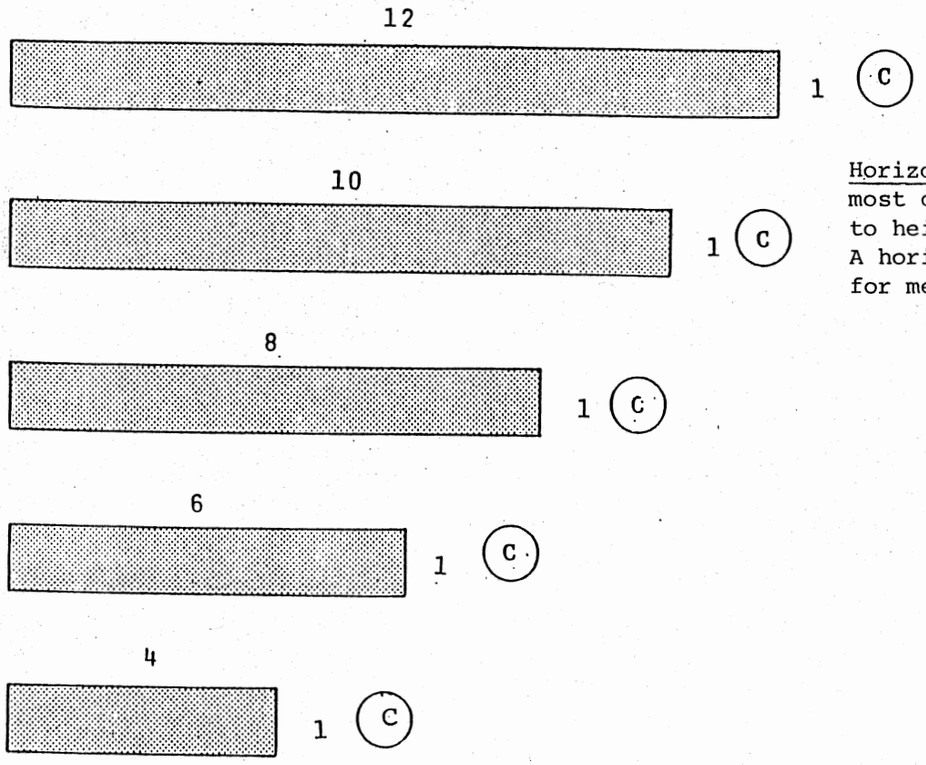


X

Exact reproductions of early American wooden signboards, constructed from several pieces of wood, were considered out of fashion for the interpretive period reflected by Old Sacramento and would be considered incorrect today.

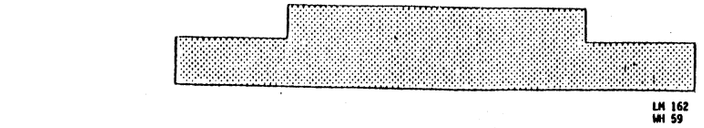
g. The architectural facade often dictates the appropriate sign shape and size. Certain sign shapes must be used in specific situations on a building and not elsewhere. Review Section V, TYPICAL SIGN TYPES on page 123 for further information.

h. The chart below portrays the predominant shapes and proportions of signs during the mid-19th Century.

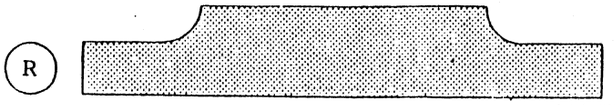


Horizontal, rectangular shapes. Historically the most common format for large signs. The length to height ratio was generally greater than 6:1. A horizontal sign with a 4:1 ratio could be used for medium and small wall-mounted signs.

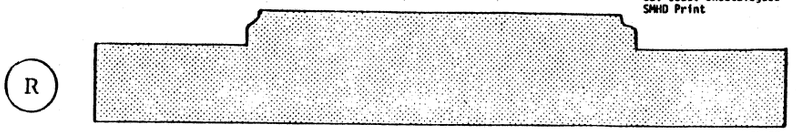
Horizontal rectangular sign shapes with an integrated upper cap. This format was adopted when the anticipated word layout on a sign dictated the need for additonal signboard copy space.



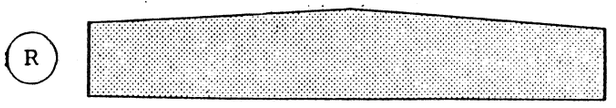
LM 162
WH 59



A.& A. HEILBRON,
Sacramento, California,
ca. 1880. Uncatalogued
SMHD Print

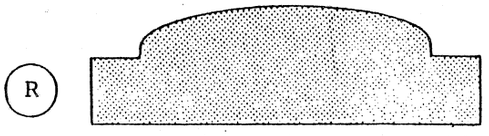


RL 28

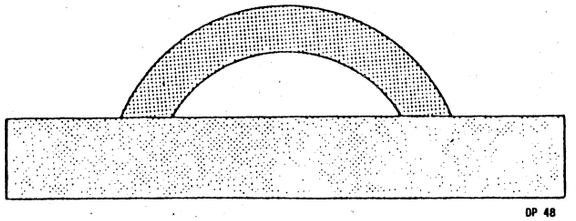


RR 102

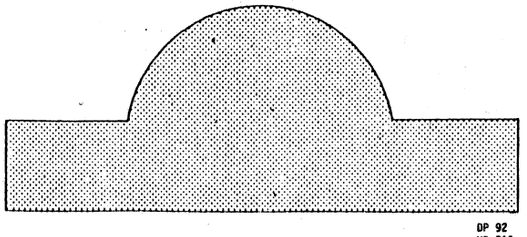
Horizontal rectangular sign with the addition of an arched upper cap. This shape was selected when the anticipated word layout required additional copy space. Never less than seven feet in horizontal length. See page 140 for example.



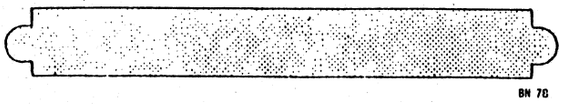
TM 253



DP 48

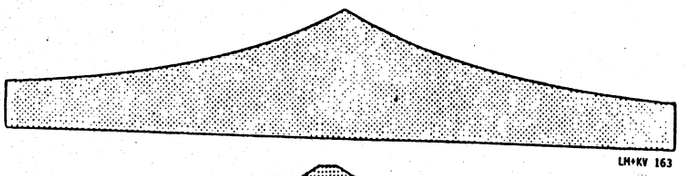


DP 92
MB 210

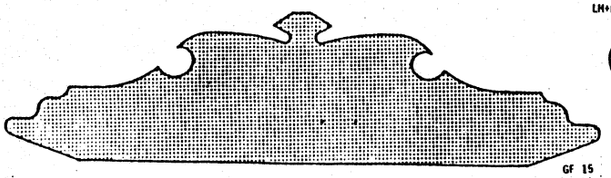


C

A variation of the horizontal sign shape with ornate end designs, and no frame. These signs were generally quite large. See page 138 for more information. Predominately an 1850's sign shape.

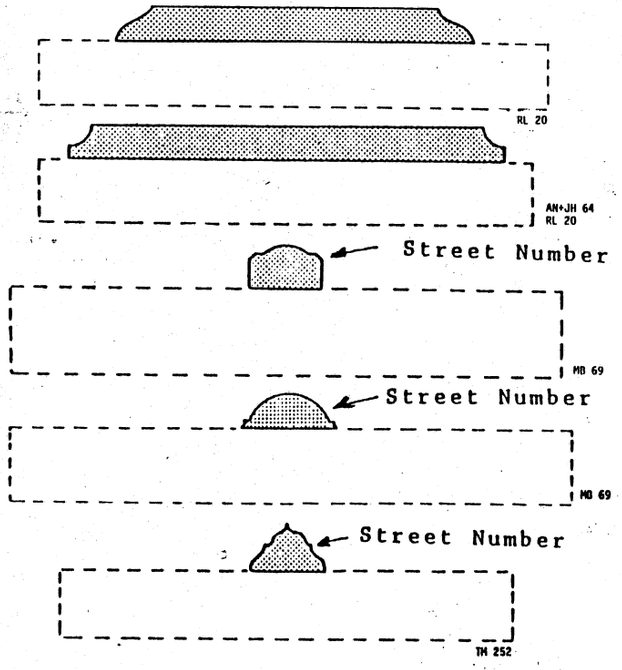


R

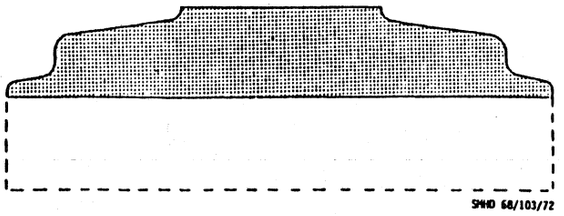


R

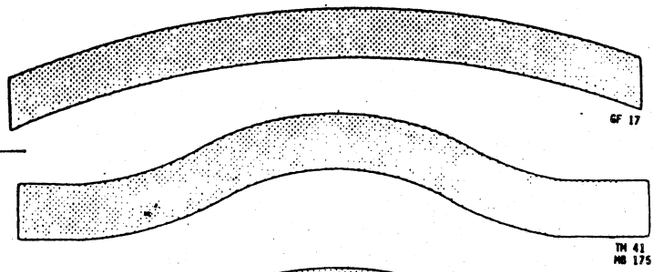
Large, horizontal sign without a frame but with some edges (other than the bottom) composed of curves or arcs of unconventional but symmetrical shape. These sign shapes were extremely rare.



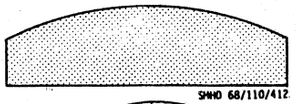
Frameless sign cap, attached to a conventionally framed horizontal sign. Many variations have been noted. Some of these cap shapes were added to framed signs to provide space for the street number. The longer horizontal shapes were occasionally used alone, in an inverted form, as an unframed signboard attached directly to the underside of canopy or balcony beam. See sign type 1d on page 128.



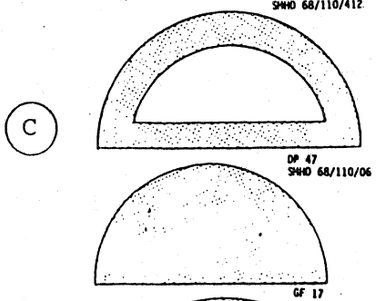
Large, horizontal arched sign shape. A relatively rare sign format, its use was limited to spanning a sidewalk as in the illustration on page 131.

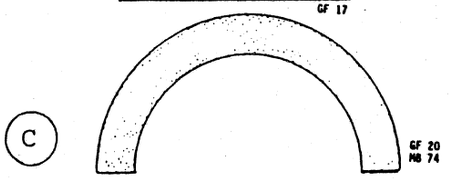


Large, horizontal flattened "bell shaped" arch sign. This was an extremely rare sign shape. When used, it usually spanned a sidewalk.

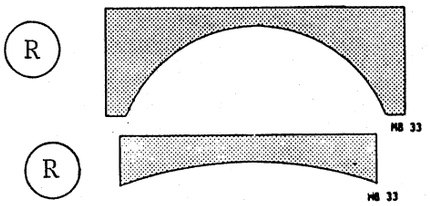


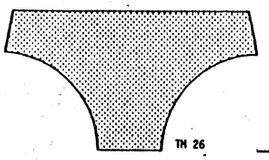
Arch sign shapes used within a brick or plaster arch of the same shape. This sign format may be used only within an existing architectural reveal or recessed area of the same shape and size. See page 144 for an example.





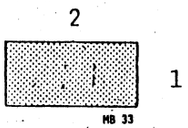
Arch sign shape used over an arched opening. This sign type may be used only over an existing architectural detail of the same shape and size. An illustration of this sign shape is on page 142.



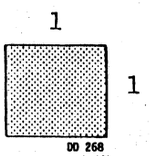

TM 26

(R)

Sign shape between two arched openings. See page 143 for an example. This was a rare sign type.

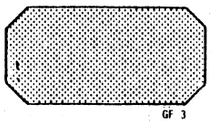


Horizontal rectangular sign shape with approximately a 2 to 1 length to height ratio. This format should be used for medium and small wall-mounted signs only.



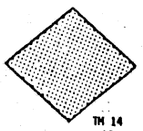
(R)

Square-shaped formats. This was a relatively rare sign type except for some projecting wall-mounted signs. In general, the square format should be avoided.


GF 3

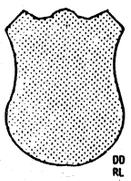
(R)

Horizontal rectangular sign shape with 45 degree angle corners. A relatively rare sign format.

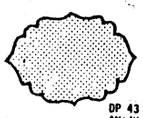

TM 14

(R)

Diamond-shaped sign. A sign shape used very rarely.

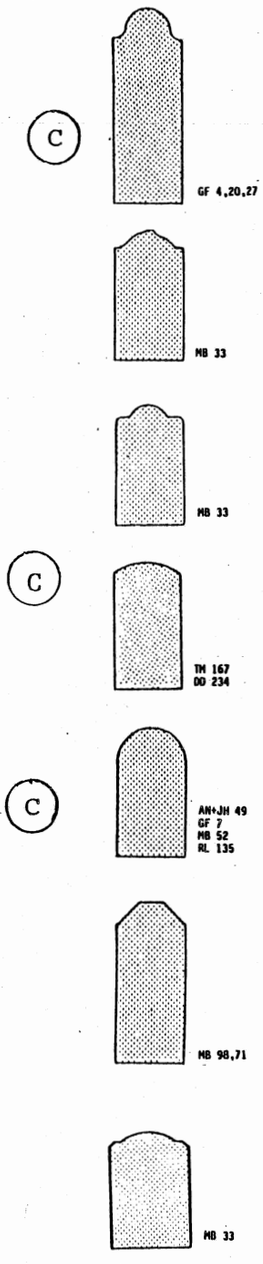


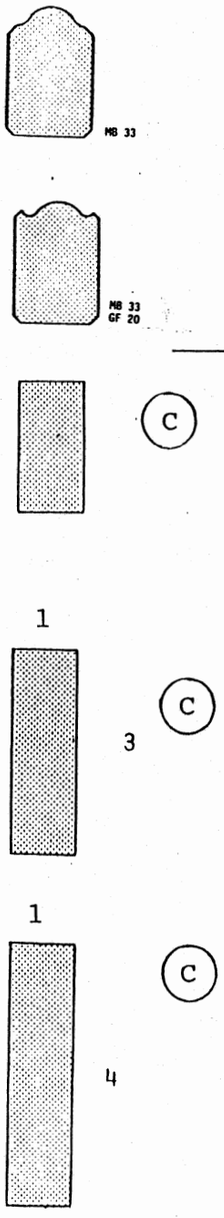
Shield-shaped sign. This shape could be used at the top of a pole, on an upper post, for curved metal signs, and occasionally for flat-mounted wall signs. Many variations in shape have been noted. Curved metal signs generally had straight sides. See wall-mounted sign types on page 145 for additional examples.



"Trade card" shaped sign. This shape was generally used for small and medium size wall mounted signs. See page 146 for other shapes.

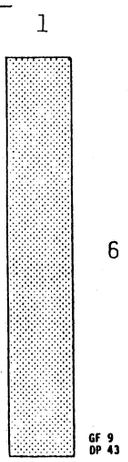
Simple "Tombstone" sign shapes. These were the most common, flat, wall-mounted sign and curved metal formats.



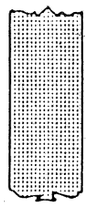


Vertical, rectangular sign shapes. These are common shapes for large and medium sized signs. See pages 67, 145, and 148 for examples of their use.

Vertical, rectangular sign shape with a height to width ratio greater than 5 to 1. This shape could be used with signs attached to canopy columns, posts, pilasters or leaning signs. See page 68 for an example.

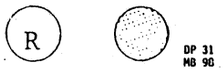


Vertical, rectangular sign with an ornate top and bottom design. An adaptation of the early American sign described on page 30 is included in this group. The sign shape was used on pilasters and flat, wall-mounted installations.



Oval-shaped signs. A rare sign shape used selectively for small projecting and flat mounted wall signs. This was not a format used commonly for large signs. The longer axis of oval could be oriented in either the veritcal or horizontal plane. See pages 149 and 160.

Circular shaped signs. This was an extremely rare sign format.



Note: Sign shapes for product symbols are not shown on this chart. See page 21 for information.

2. SIGN SCALE

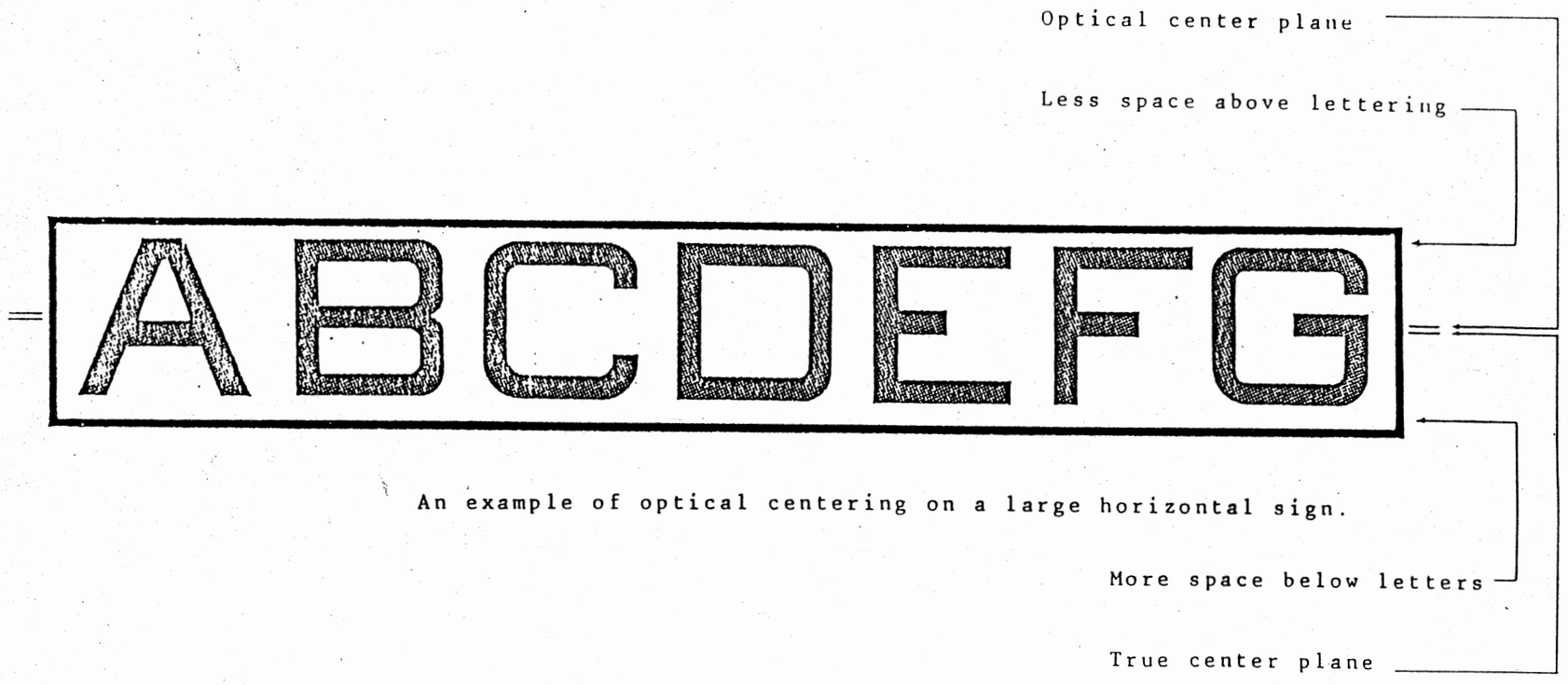
The scale of a sign plays an important role in the reproduction of historic style signs. Some sign types, therefore, have been given a minimum size. These minimum sizes insure that signs will be reproduced as closely as possible to their known historic precedents. When important, dimensions are stated in the TYPICAL SIGN TYPES, STREET ADDRESSES, and in the PRODUCT SYMBOLS & DISPLAYS Sections. Size guidelines will be strictly enforced for signs mounted on the street facade of a building.

3. VISUAL BALANCE

(C)

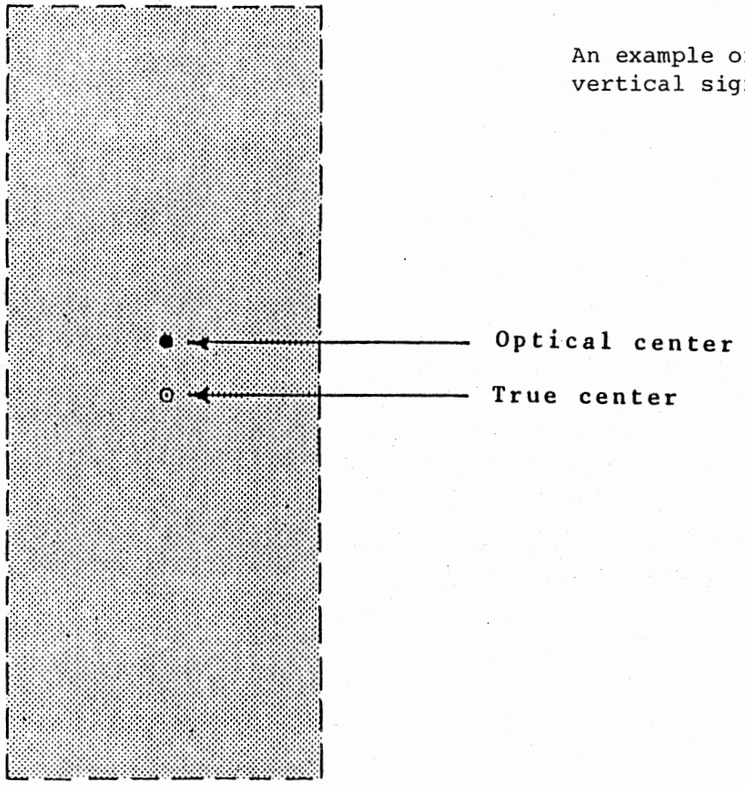
Signs should be visually balanced both vertically and horizontally. Generally, sign layouts were symmetrical. Optical centering, however, was a common practice during the historic period.

A sign's visual, horizontal center is approximately five to ten percent above its measured center. On a horizontal sign, the space below the sign copy should be slightly wider than the space above to achieve a visual balance.



An example of optical centering on a large horizontal sign.

The central focus for word layouts on vertical signs should be slightly above the sign's true center.



An example of a common layout adjustment on a vertical sign. See pages 43, 56 for examples.

4. TYPEFACE VARIETY

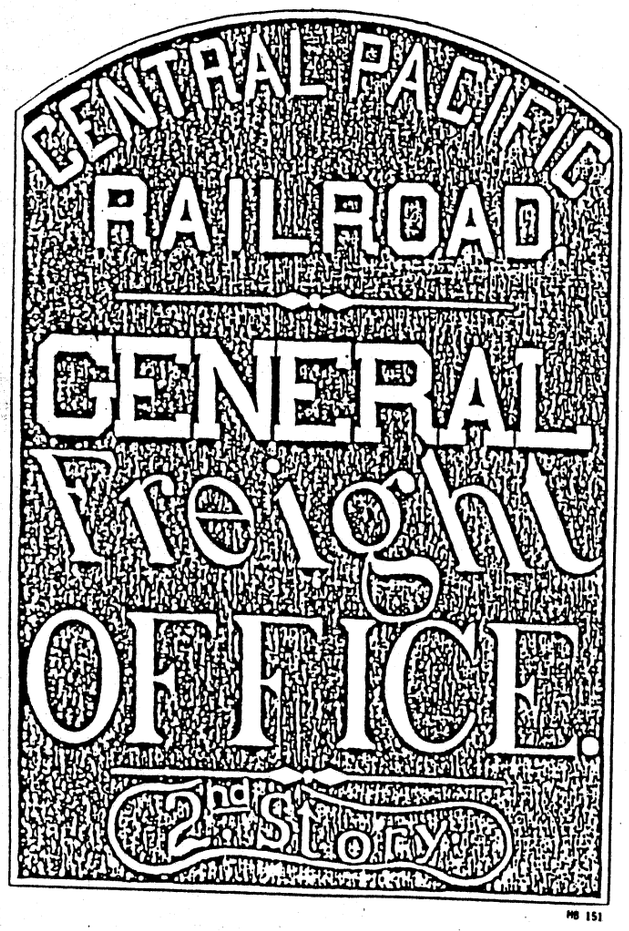
(C)

The use of many different typeface styles on one sign is an important characteristic of 19th Century signs. Each line of a sign's text should be distinctively different from all others on that sign. Rarely were two lines of type exactly the same.

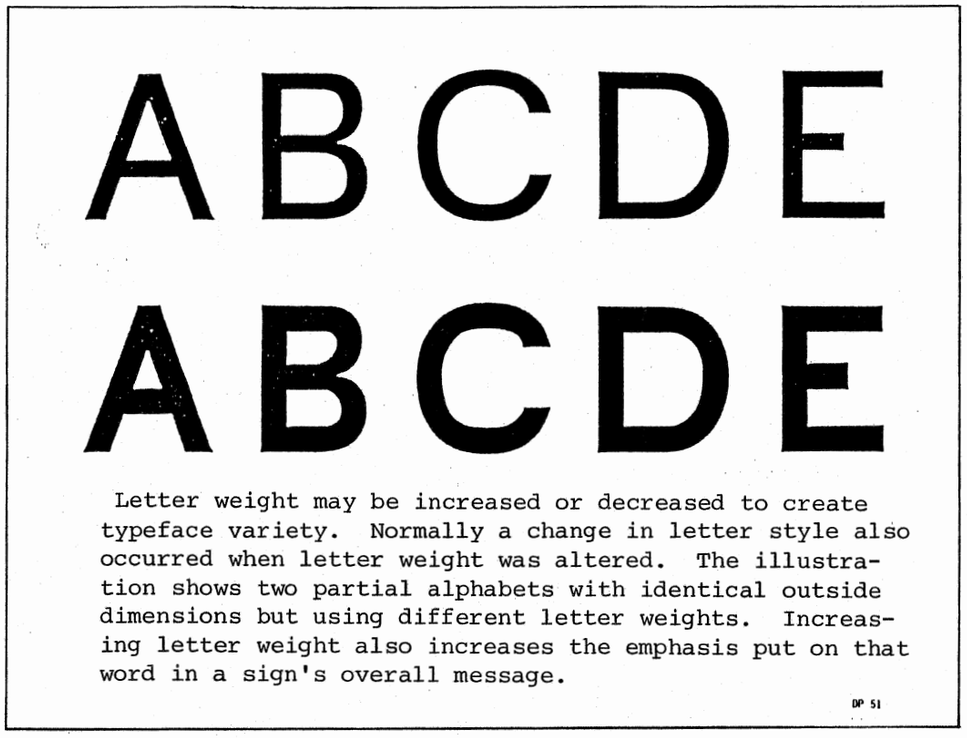
Typeface variety was achieved principally by using typefaces in the Roman, san serif and block letter families. Subtle, but distinctive appearance changes could be achieved by simply adding serifs to plain block styles, increasing letter weight, lettering on a slant (italicizing), using three-dimensional letter shadows and less commonly, by using lower case typestyles.

In addition to using diverse typestyles, differentiation could be achieved by curving the words on a line of sign text. Common curved word shapes are arches, and flattened "U"'s and "S"'s. It should be noted that a different typeface was often used even when words were curved.

Typeface variety was particularly noticeable on vertical sign formats during the historic period. See sections entitled TYPEFACES and RULE ONE-FILL THE SPACE for techniques used in creating the appropriate combination of letter styles and word shapes. Turn to pages 56 and 66 for other examples.



"The same style of letter should not be employed in two adjacent lines, except it be in enumeration of a list of articles or several addresses. Letters belonging to different classes or styles should not be used in the same line, except for ornamental purposes, and then they should be used sparingly." Page 107, F. Shriber, 1907.



Letter weight may be increased or decreased to create typeface variety. Normally a change in letter style also occurred when letter weight was altered. The illustration shows two partial alphabets with identical outside dimensions but using different letter weights. Increasing letter weight also increases the emphasis put on that word in a sign's overall message.

5. RULE ONE - FILL THE SPACE

(C)

During the historic period, word and design elements occupied the entire framed or bordered area of a sign. Open spaces or margins were rarely left unfilled. By today's standards, most signs looked "cluttered" and extremely cramped for space. The underlying rule was to completely fill all the available space. Methods for minimizing empty spaces are as follow:

a. Word layouts were developed which fit the accepted sign formats of the historic period.

b. In many cases the final size and proportions of a signboard could be determined after the word layout was established.

c. Listed below are methods for effectively lengthening or shortening words or word groups to fit the available space. Several prefatory remarks should be made about these space filling-techniques.

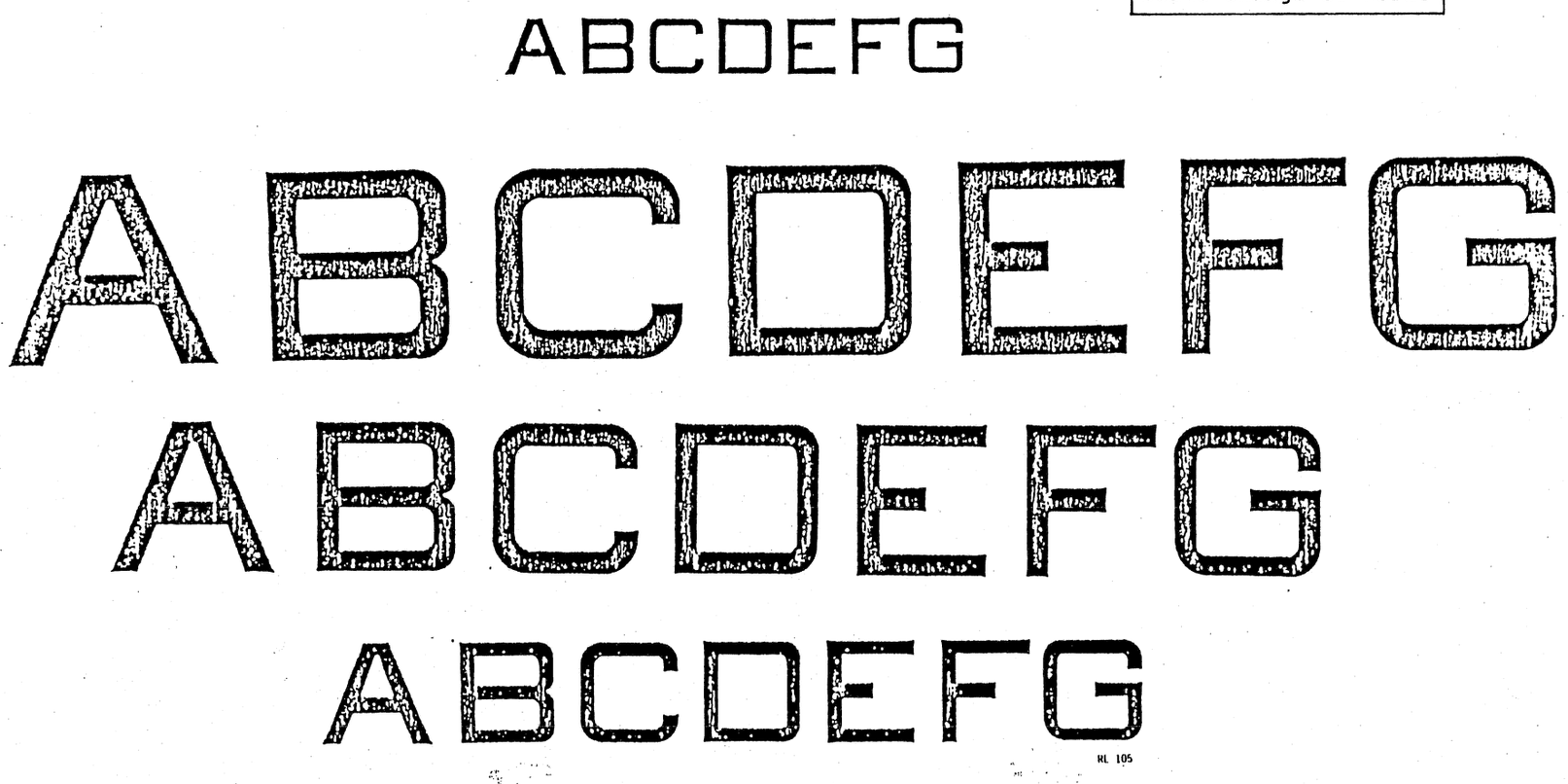
   Spacing problems occur most often on vertical signs. Vertically oriented signs used all the techniques described in this section including: change of word scale, condensation or extension of words, rotating words, arching or "U"-ing, and "S"-ing words, and stacking of letters.

   Horizontal signs did not normally use all these space filling techniques. Lettering was not stacked on horizontal signs. Word layout was always kept harmonious with this format. A horizontal sign had a horizontal text.

(1) Words may vary in scale from one to another. Secondary phrases and connecting words were often smaller than other words on a sign.

(C)

Scale change of words



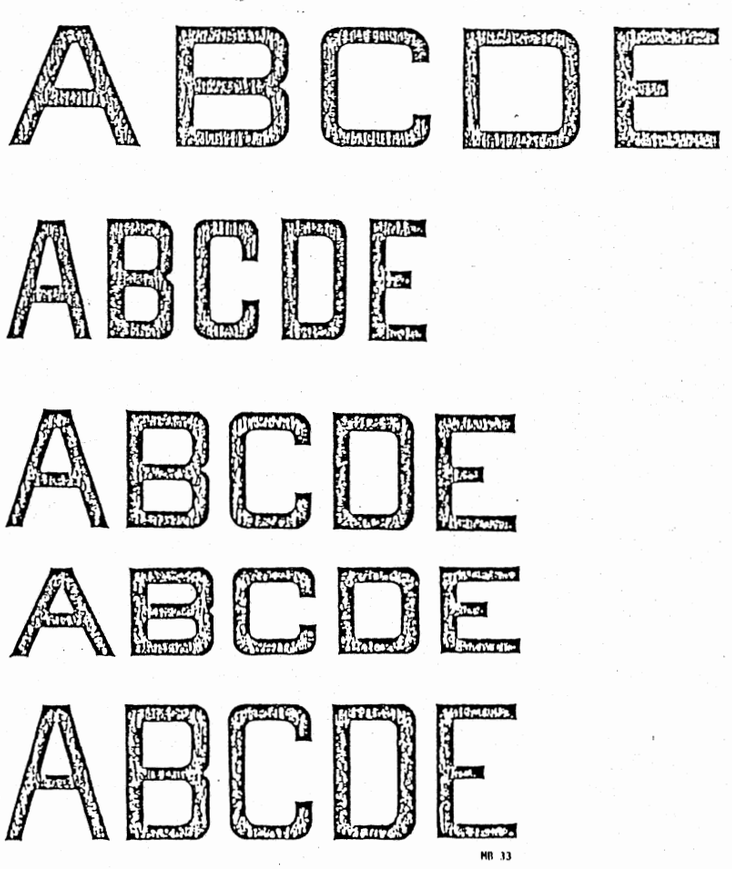
The scale of lines of type could be varied to fill space.

(C) (2) Letters on signs may be condensed or extended. The diagram below illustrates how letter proportion can be altered by condensation or extension of letters. See page 43 for an example.

Condensed or extended lettering

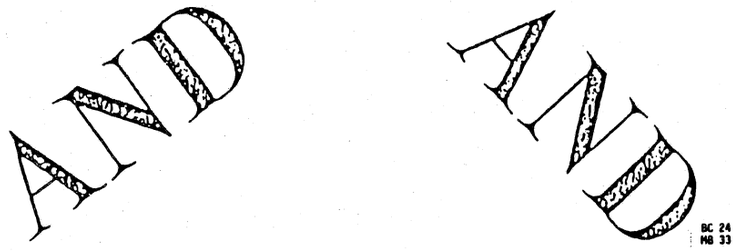
Letter width is varied while the height is held constant.

Letter height is varied while the width is held constant.



(3) Space between letters in a word and between words may be expanded or reduced (slightly!). See pages 139 and 157 for examples.

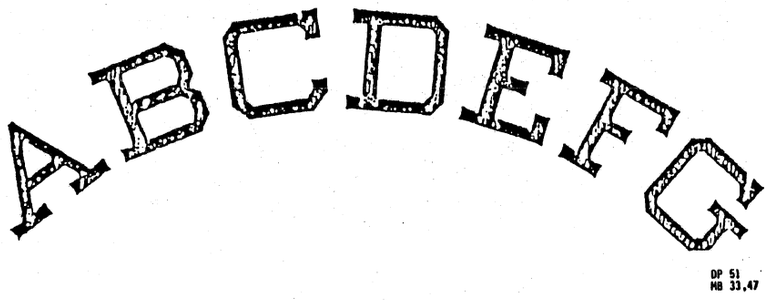
(4) Words can be rotated up or down. This was a common technique for inserting connecting words such as "and", "to be" and "in" into a sign's text. See pages 126,157 for examples. Rotated words other than conjunctions were unusual until approximately 1870. (C)



Rotated Words

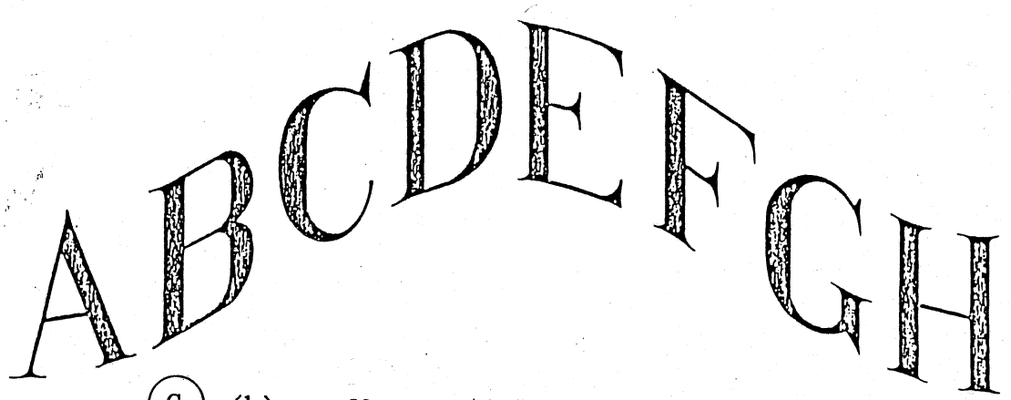
(5) Words can be arched in several ways. These word shapes were commonly used at the top of vertically oriented signs.

(a) A simple arch of constant radius. (C)



Arched Words

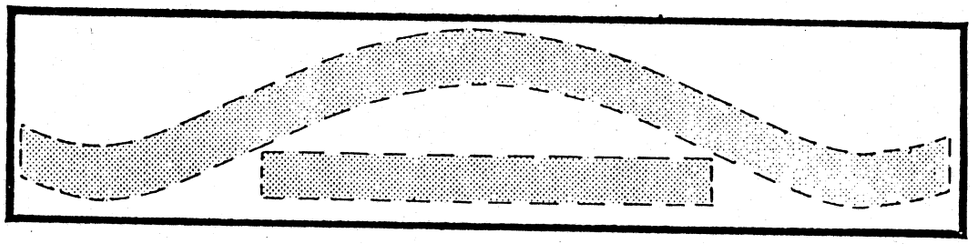
Words Arched



(C) (b) A flattened "bell" shaped arch

TM 45
MB 33

"Bell" shaped word arrangements were only occasionally used on large horizontal signs.
See also page 64.



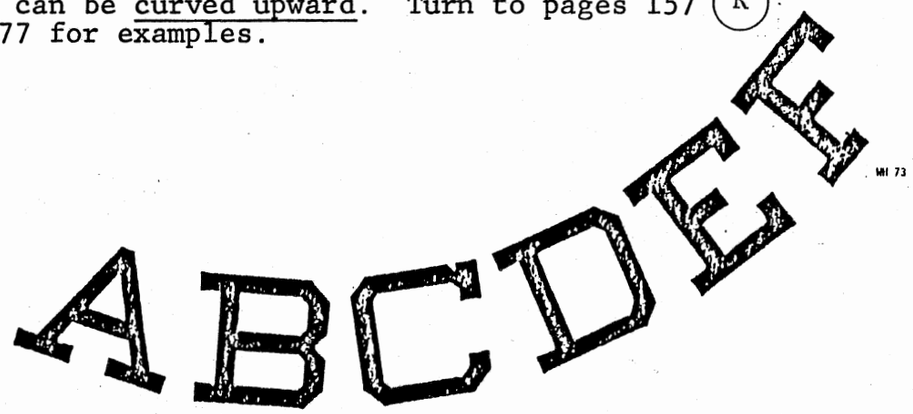
Lines of sign text are represented by gray blocks.

(C) (6) Words may be "U"-d. An inverted "bell" shaped "U" could also be used (not shown).

"U"-d Words

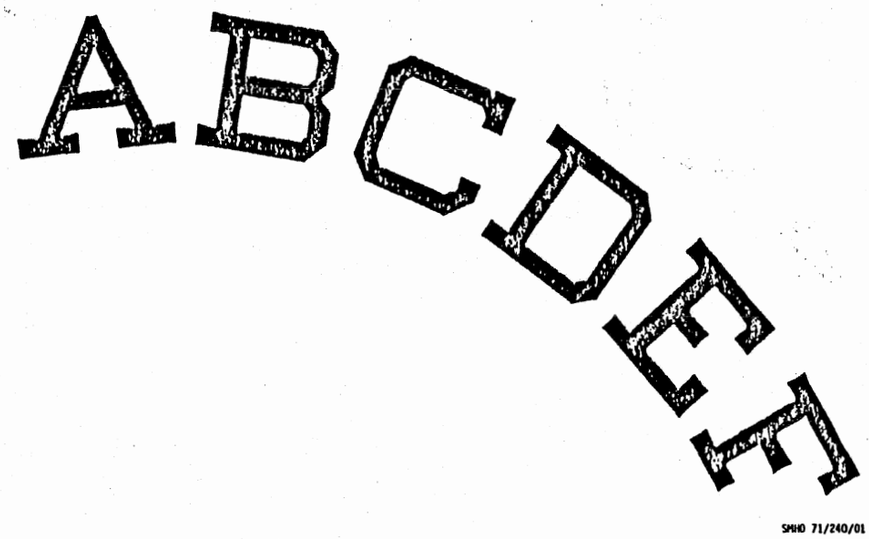
MB 33.47

(7) Words can be curved upward. Turn to pages 157 (R) and 177 for examples.



Words curved upward

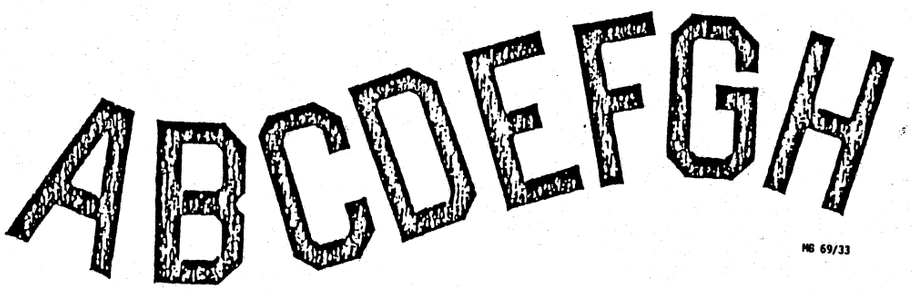
(8) Words can be curved downward. Examples are shown (R) on pages 158 and 166.



Words curved downward

(C) (9) Words may be "S"-curved. The angle at which "S"-curved words can be placed on a sign is adjustable. The "S"-d word layouts may vary from horizontal to an almost vertical format. See pages 65 and 111 for examples of appropriate use.

"S" curved words

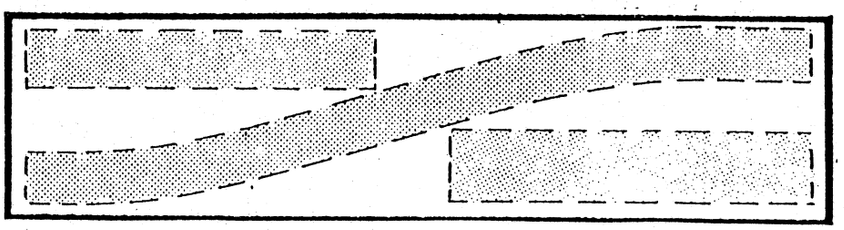


"S"-ing can be done by using either a conventional flattened "S" (as above) or by reversing the "S" (as illustrated below).

Reverse "S" curved words

(R)

On occasion (rare), an "S"-curved word group was used on a large horizontal sign. See also pages 63-65.



"S"-ing was sometimes done in the form of a ribbon.
See page 59 for an example of actual use on a sign.

"S" curved words in a ribbon

(10) Words may be lapped through "S"-ing. This can effectively condense a long series of words. (C)

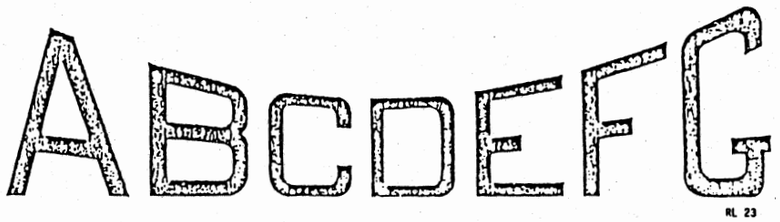
"S" curved and lapped words

Two, three or more words may be lapped in this manner.

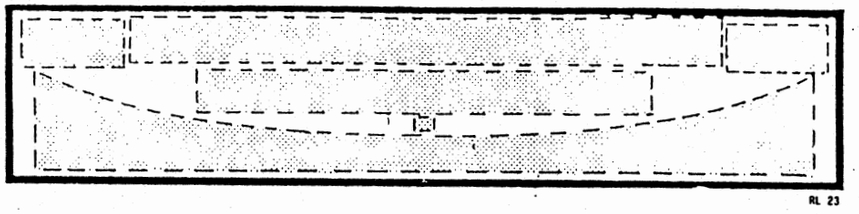
(11) Proportion of letters can be varied vertically to create the layouts illustrated in (a)-(d). This method of lettering was introduced in the 1860's but did not become popular until the 1870's. Those wishing to reflect the earliest era in their signs, therefore, should not use this space filling technique.

Vertical dimension of letters varied in a smooth curve

(R) (a)



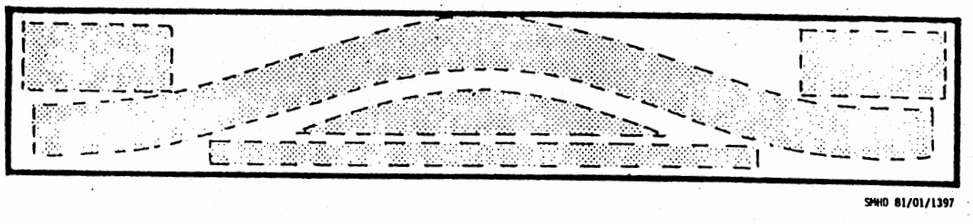
Occasionally this space-filling technique was used on large horizontal signs.



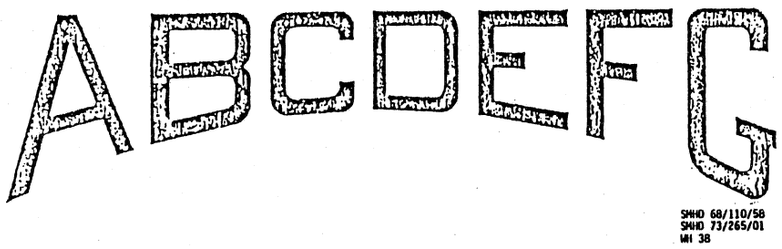
Vertical dimension of letters varied in a smooth curve

(R) (b)

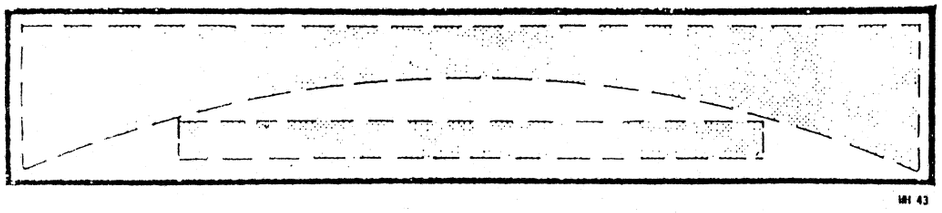
Occasionally this space-filling technique was used on large horizontal signs.



(R) (c)

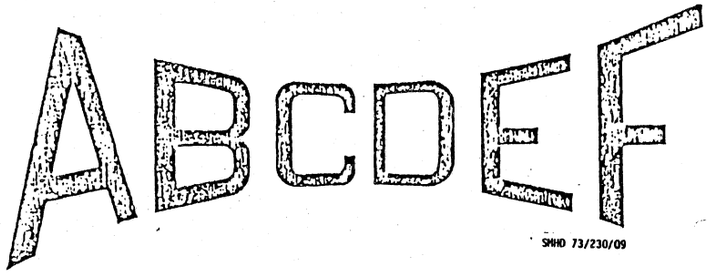


Vertical dimension of letters varied in a smooth curve

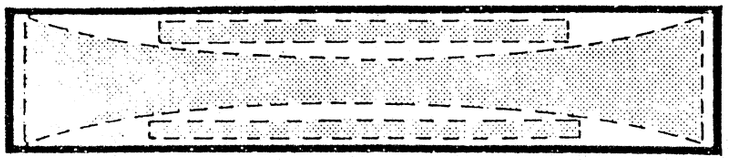


Occasionally this space-filling technique was used on large horizontal signs.

(R) (d)



Vertical dimension of letters varied in smooth curves



Occasionally this space-filling technique was used on large horizontal signs.

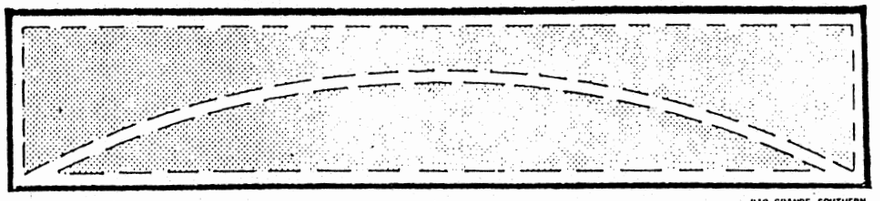
(e) Two words differentially enlarged or reduced to fit together.

(R) 1)

Vertical dimension of letters varied in a smooth curve

RIO GRANDE SOUTHERN RAILROAD SIGN

Occasionally this technique was used to fill the space of large horizontal signs.



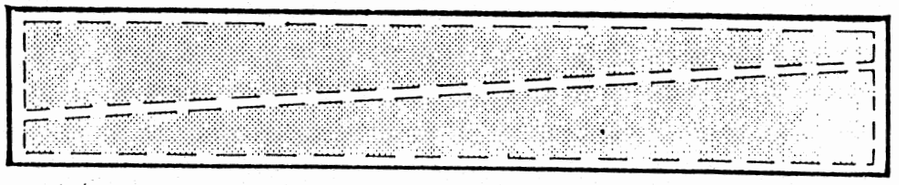
RIO GRANDE SOUTHERN RAILROAD SIGN

(R) 2)

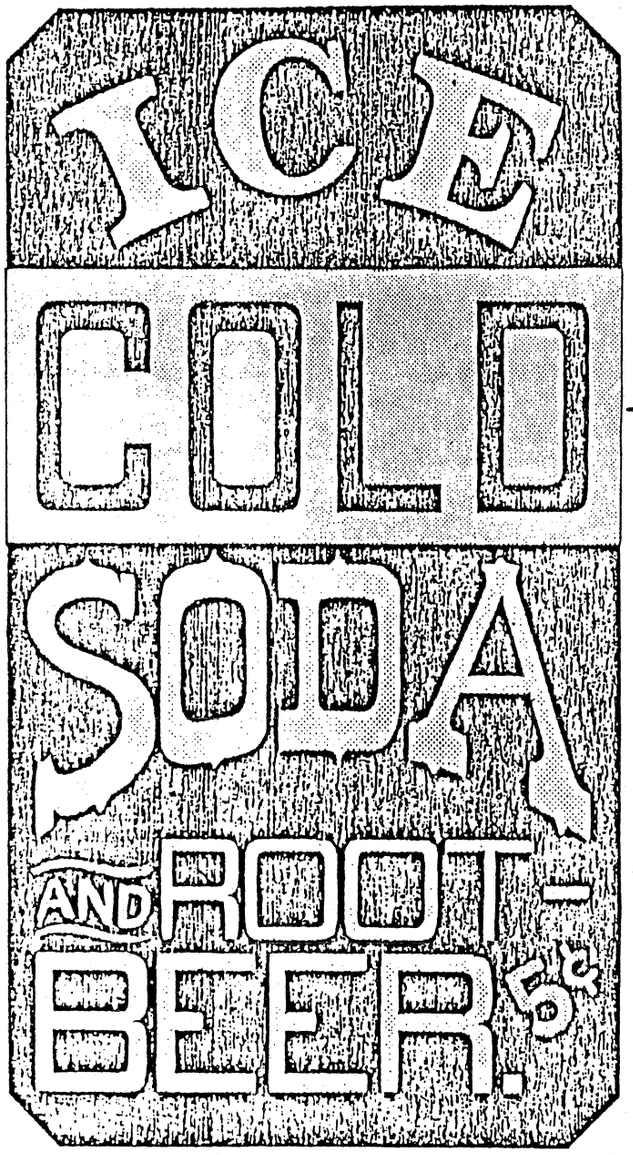
Vertical dimension of letters varied

SMHD 68/110/201

Although rare, this lettering format was used periodically on large horizontal signs.

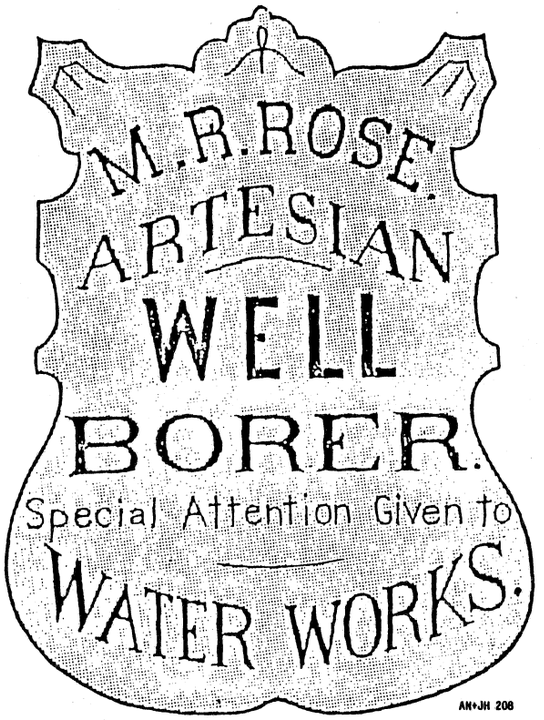


PORTLAND, OREGON, ca. 1870



SMHD 73/265/01

← Blue band



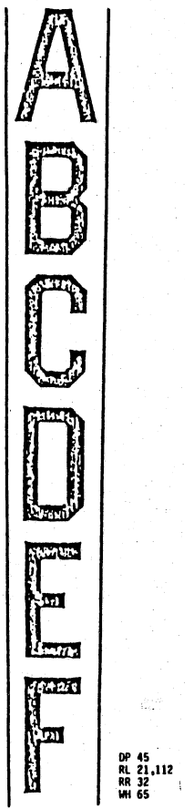
AN+JH 208

Notice space—filling methods being used in these examples. Only when these techniques are thoroughly understood, is it possible to develop signs which typify the appearance of signs from Old Sacramento interpretive period.

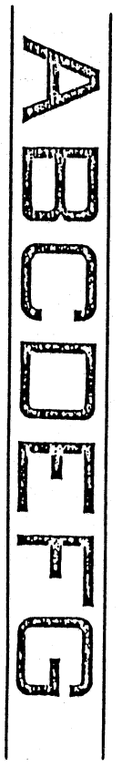
Note the word "WELL" in the M.R. Rose sign. The word has been condensed. This deliberate reversal of rule number 1, sets words off from the remainder of the sign's message. Occasionally, this attention getting device was used on small wall-mounted signs.

(12) Letters can be stacked but only on narrow vertical sign formats.

Stacked lettering on a narrow vertical format. See page 134.



(R) Lettering stacked on its side

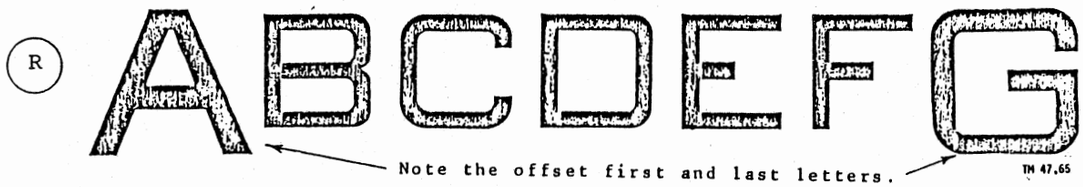


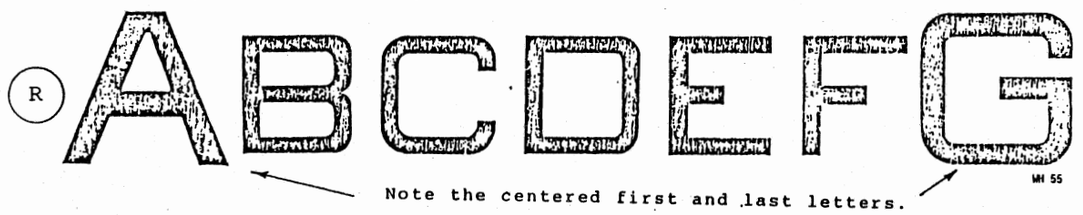
(R) Stacked, slanted lettering on its side.

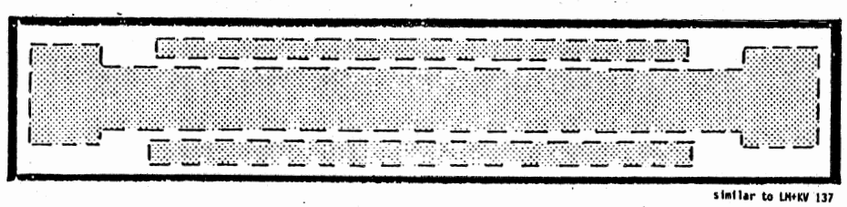
Stacked words should always read from top to bottom.

(13) Lettering can be stacked on its side but only on narrow, vertical formats. Often when this was done; the lettering was also slanted.

(14) Once in awhile, the first (and sometimes the last) letter of a line of text, was made larger than the rest of the letters in a statement. The larger letter was centered or offset in relation to the remainder of the word group. This is predominantely and 1870's design concept.







An example of how this lettering format can be used on a large horizontal sign.

(15) Scrolls and curvilinear accents were added to a sign's layout to fill out the left over space. See CURVILINEAR ACCENTS and PINSTRIPING AND SCROLLS subsections, beginning on pages 105 and 113, for a more detailed description of their use.

d. Like lettering, most interior design elements, such as ribbons, follow "Rule One" as well. They filled the space.

MB 69
AN+JH 46

Ribbons and other interior design elements follow the "fill the space" principle.

e. Double-faced signboards, partially obscured on one side because an installation technique, (example: a sign mounted at the base of a canopy post), often had the word layouts on one side altered to fit the space. Each side would be slightly different from the other. **See pages 131 and 166 for** types of signs which can be affected.

f. Text on canvas awnings, shades, drop curtains and window glass signs, filled the space designated for the sign. This was usually less than the total surface area of the canvas, cloth or glass. See **examples on pages 151,155,158 and 162.**

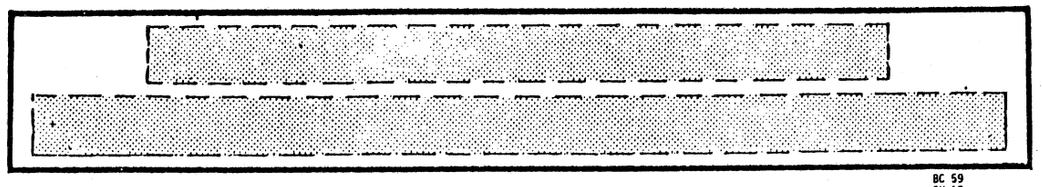
6. WORD PATTERNS ON SIGNS

a. Large horizontal signs generally used few words. One or two lines of type laid out parallel to the top and bottom of the sign's frame were typically the most common formats. Below are two examples of text laid out on large horizontal signs.

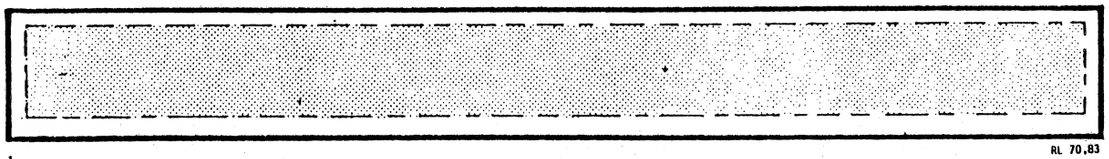
TM 70

TM 41

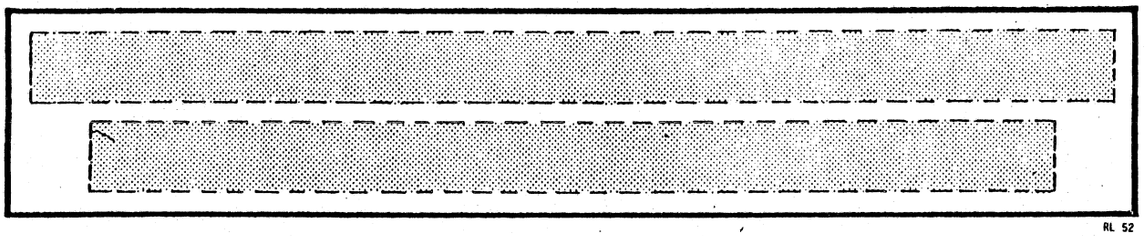
Lines of text are represented by gray blocks in the typical horizontal signboard layouts (a-f).



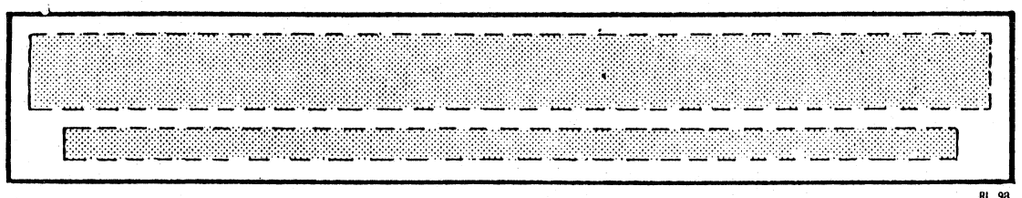
a.



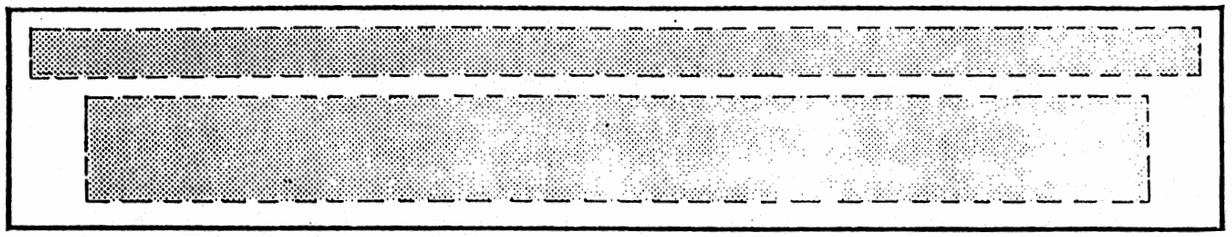
b.



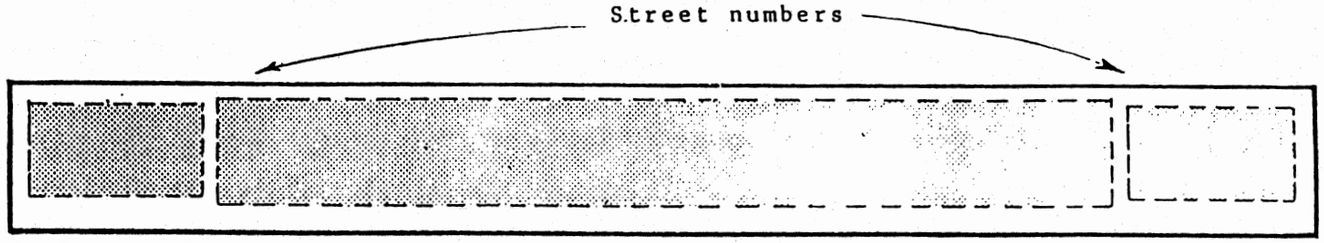
c.



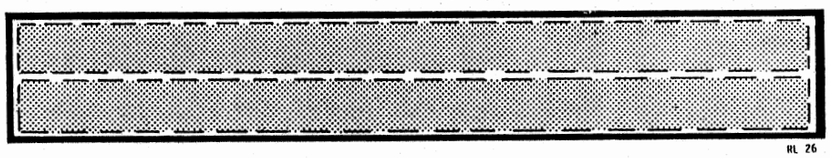
d.



e.

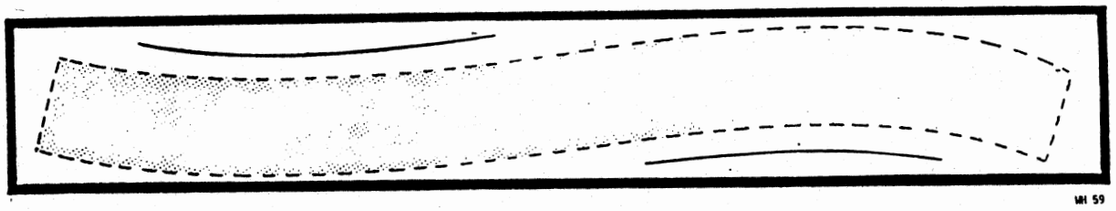


f.

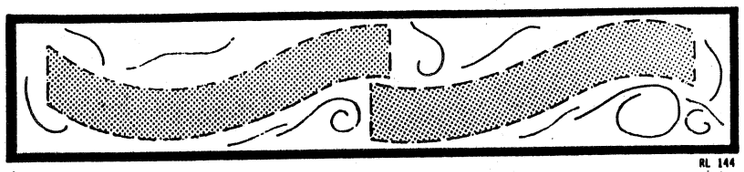


g.

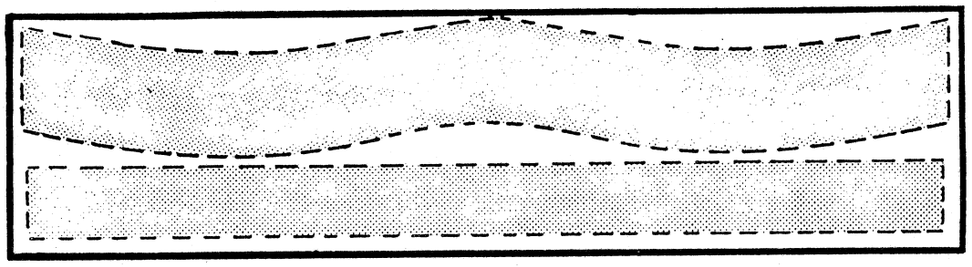
Less common was the use of words formed into an "S" or arched shape on a large horizontal rectangular sign board. One, two or more "S"-d words could be used in a row.



h.

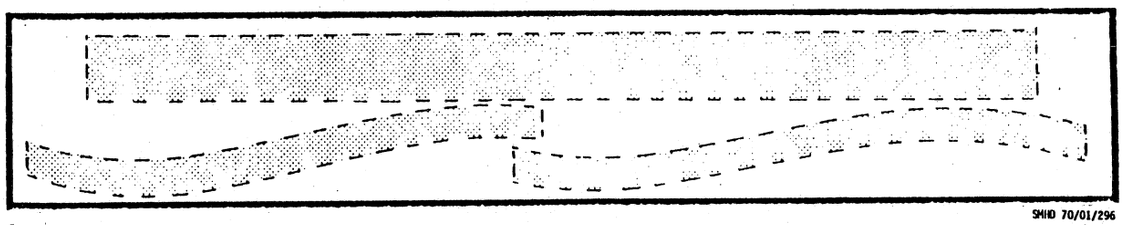


i.



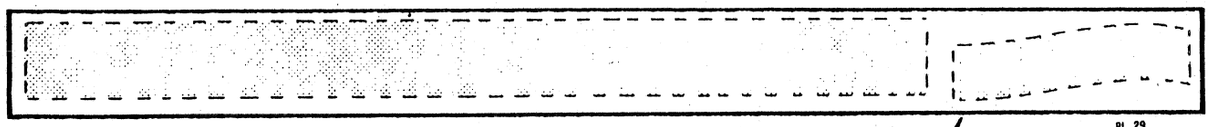
j.

The following word patterns were occasionally used (k-o). Examples n and o were very rare. Asymetrical word patterns were occasionally used with signs oriented at right angles to a building face.



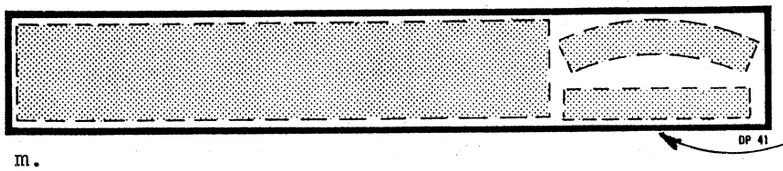
R

k.



R

l.

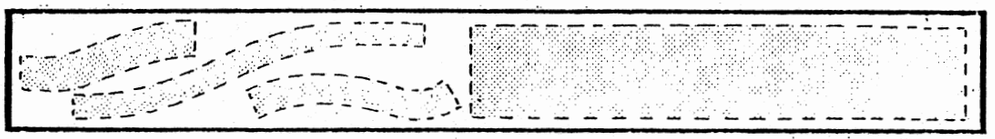


R

Street end of sign

m.

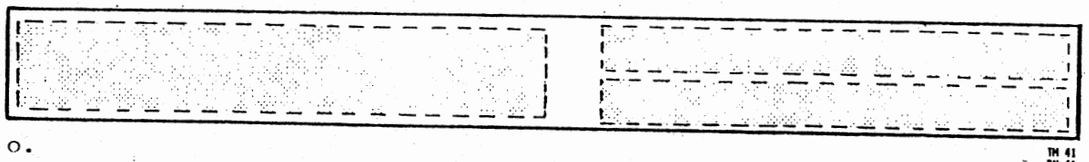
(R)



SMHD 70/01/296

n.

(R)



TM 41
BN 41

o.

This is by no means a complete chart of possible word patterns for horizontal signs. See other illustrations of horizontal signs throughout the guidelines.

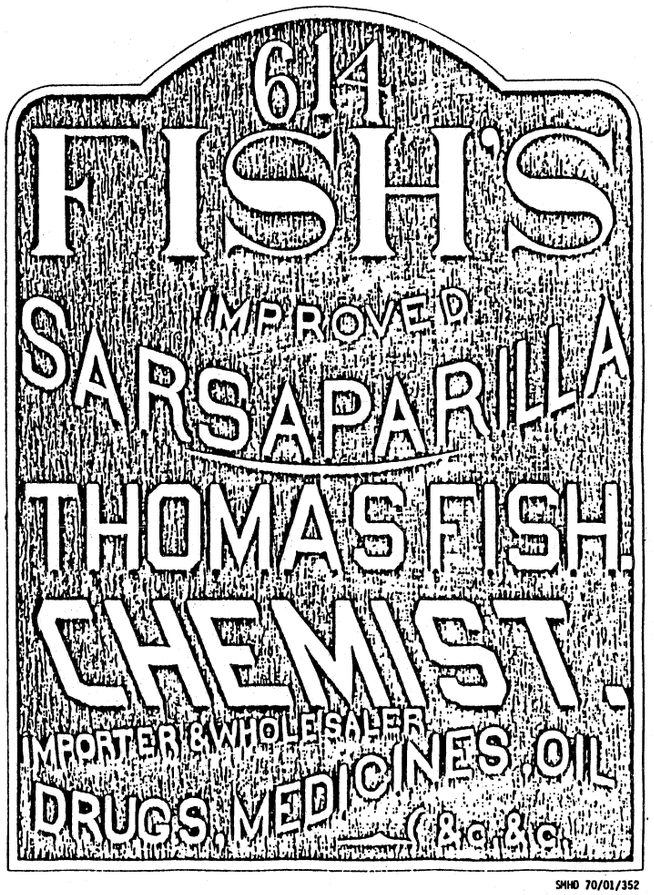
6. Messages were rarely divided into smaller segments on large signs. Each line of a sign text on horizontal signs usually extended the full length of the signboard. The message was designed to be read left to right from top to bottom.

(R) An example of a divided message format rarely used on large horizontal signs.

c. Vertical and medium-sized horizontal signs are typified by many lines of text. For the purposes of this manual, these signs will be subdivided into two types: formal and casual formats.

(C) (1) Formal word patterns.

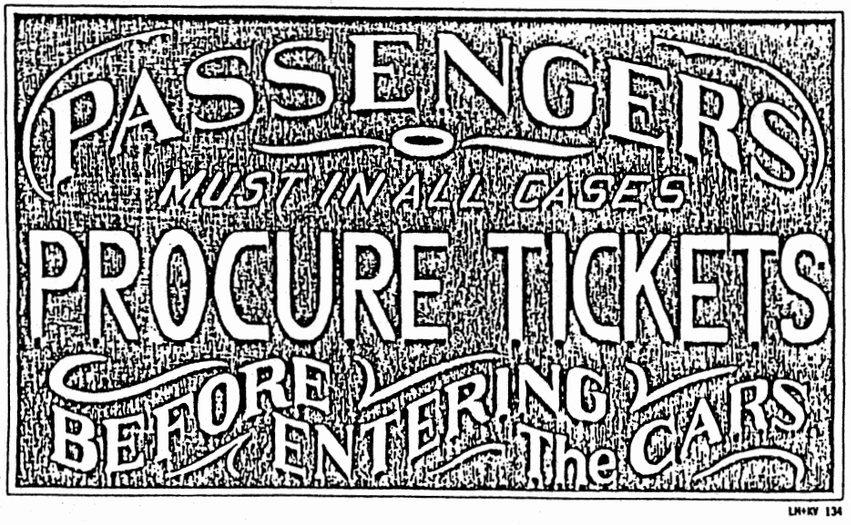
Generally each line of type or word statement on these signs is distinctively different from any other on the sign. The lettering, even though arched, U'd, S'd etc., is primarily laid out in a symmetrical pattern of horizontal bands across the signboard. This is the most common format for vertical signs.



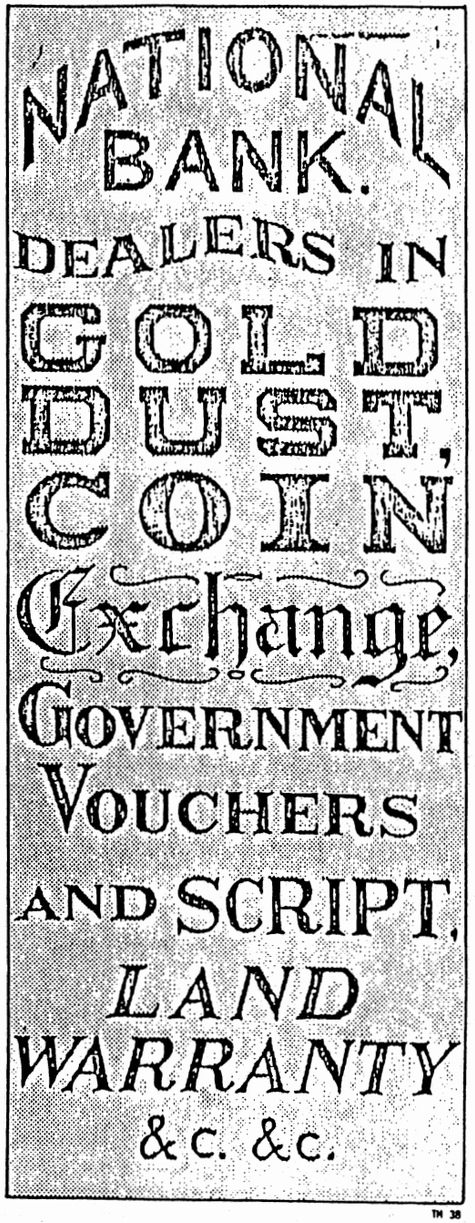
An example of a formal sign layout

Examples of formal word patterns

"Work small words into the layout (such as AND, DEALER IN, IN, manufactures of) placed alone, worked into ribbons or scrolls and never attached to the end of a long line of greater importance." Page 107, F. Shriber, 1907.



LN+KY 134

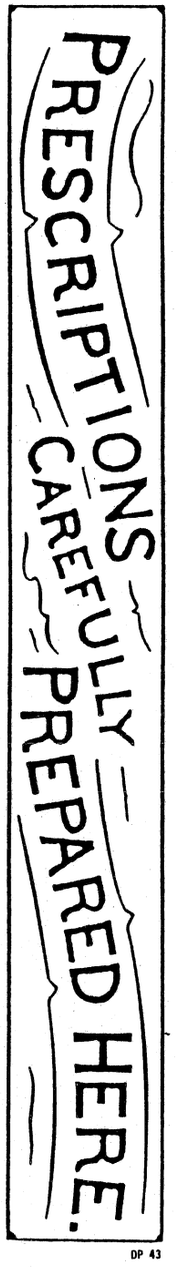


TN 38

(2) Casual word patterns.

A simpler format used for less permanent signs during the historic period, the layout was generally composed of plain lettering (usually san serif) having all words of the text in the same typestyle. Some differentiation of the message was achieved through curving, arching, "S"-ing, and changing the scale of individual words. In general, layouts were either slanted or curved down across the signboard, or interwoven through the technique of "S"-ing. Linear accents were extensively used in casual work layouts. In Old Sacramento, the casual word pattern will be limited to use on pilaster signs, leaning signs, vertical signs attached to the lower and upper portions of a canopy column or post, and to freestanding "A" frames and triangular sides signs. See pages 145, 166, 169, 175-77 for an explanation of these sign types. Casual and formal word patterns were rarely combined on the same sign.

d. Extremely narrow vertical sign formats characteristically used either a single row of stacked lettering, a single row of lettering on its side (often sloped) or a single row of "S"-d or lapped words on their sides. See page 57 for examples.



An example of a casual word pattern. Note that this sign's word layout is acceptable if the sign is oriented horizontally. See page 166 for an additional example.

C. DESIGN COMPONENTS

Modern sign artists need to understand and select historically appropriate design elements when creating signs for the Old Sacramento Historic District. During the interpretive period of the District, most signs used simple block, san serif and Roman letter styles. Occasionally, typefaces were given a raised three-dimensional feeling. Special rules must be followed when lettering on curves.

A period punctuation mark should be placed after each word statement on a sign. The building address may be incorporated into a sign's design. Artistic curvilinear accents are used to fill minor voids in sign word patterns and to accent important words.

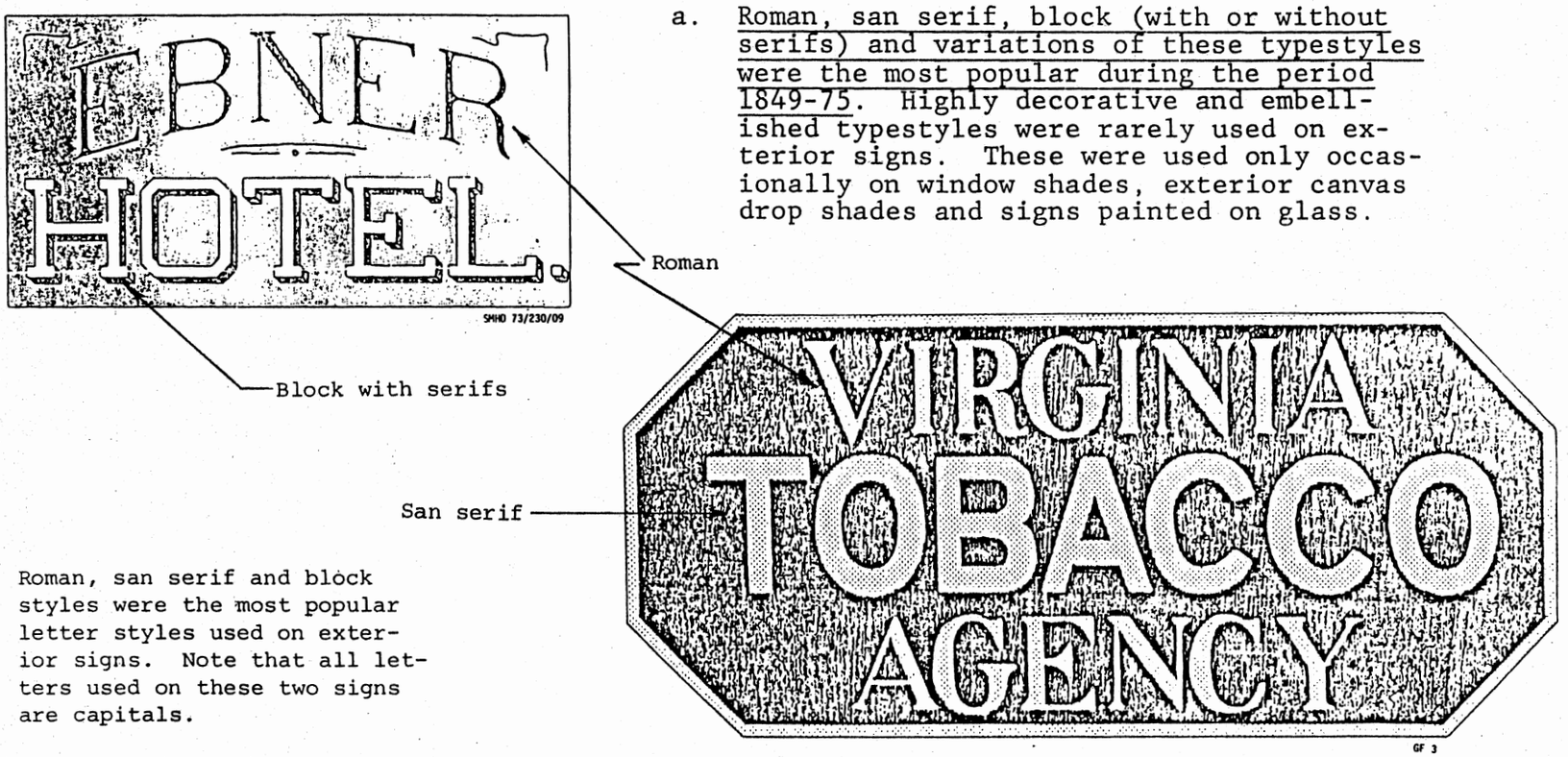
All sign surfaces are required to be painted. Black and white paints should predominate on exterior signs. Most wall mounted signs should have dark colored backgrounds. Pinstriped borders are appropiate on signs having dark background colors.

DESIGN COMPONENTS describes appropiate typefaces, punctuation marks, street numbers and their placement on the signboard, artistic accents and color schemes for exterior signs.

1. TYPEFACES

The following are characteristics of typography used in the historic period interpreted by Old Sacramento. It should be noted that there was a much greater range in type styles used in printed material of the time period than that which was used on exterior signs. Not all typefaces of the 1849-75 period are appropiate for exterior signs. Past usage will determine present use in Old Sacramento.

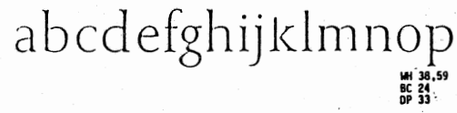
a. Roman, san serif, block (with or without serifs) and variations of these typestyles were the most popular during the period 1849-75. Highly decorative and embellished typestyles were rarely used on exterior signs. These were used only occasionally on window shades, exterior canvas drop shades and signs painted on glass.



Roman, san serif and block styles were the most popular letter styles used on exterior signs. Note that all letters used on these two signs are capitals.

b. Most sign texts were composed totally in upper case letters.

c. Lower case Roman and san serif lettering was used only occasionaly, mainly for conjunctive words, short connective phrases and secondary messages. For sign text elements other than single connecting words, it was common to use capital letters for the first letter of each word. For connective phrases such as "Dealer in", the first letter of the first word of the phrase was capitalized only.

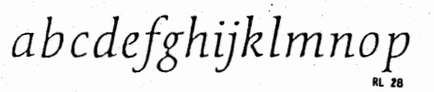


Lower case Roman

See page 256 for enlarged examples of lower case Roman and san serif typefaces.

Lower case san serif

An italic letter slope (slant) was also commonly added to both lower case Roman and san serif lettering. The letter slant could be established in either a forward or backward direction.



Lower case Roman italic (forward slant)

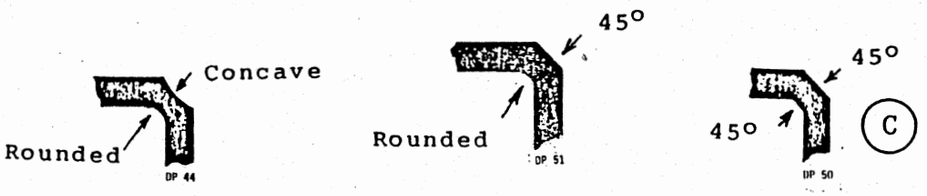
See page 257 for enlarged examples of slanted lower case letters.

Lower case san serif italic (forward slant)

d. Capital letters should, in general, be made uniform in height. During the late 1860's and early 1870's, a new design change caught on which encouraged the slight enlargement of the first letter of each word in a line of text.

Enlargement of first letters of a word is predominantly an 1875 through 1890 design element and not the Old Sacramento era. All letters should, in general, be made uniform in height.

e. Several variations in corner design are possible with block lettering. These include: 45° angles on both the inside and outside of the corner, 45° outer corners and rounded inner corners, concave outer corners and rounded inner corners.



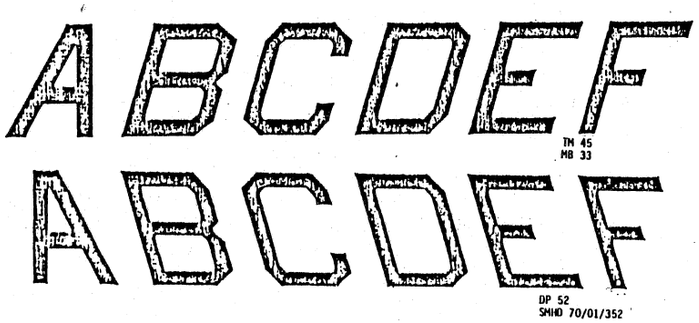
f. "Blocked" letter forms on large signs with few words were common. See Section B dealing with LETTER BLOCKING, SHADING AND CAST SHADOW starting on page 87.

(R) g. Old English or German script typefaces were used only occasionally.

A B C D E F G H I K
L M N O P Q R S T U
V W X Y Z &
a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v
w x 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 y z

TM 45
GF 15

h. Most styles of lettering may be slanted forward or backwards. See page 66 and 67 for examples.



TM 45
MB 33

DP 52
SMHD 70/01/352

Lettering sloped forward

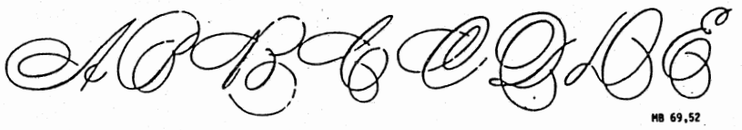
Lettering sloped backward

i. Letters could follow a curve. See page 95 for information on curved lettering.

j. Script or cursive lettering was rarely used on exterior signs until the mid 1870's and will, therefore, be restricted in use in the Old Sacramento Historic District. See page 121 for a complete alphabet.

(R)

Script letter styles should be avoided.



MB 69,52

k. The following are examples of typestyles commonly used on exterior signs during the years 1849 - 1875. They are broken down into groups according to the frequency of their occurrence historically. Complete alphabets, numerals, and punctuation are presented in Appendix A, beginning on page 217.

Note: This manual does not cover techniques used in developing actual letter and alphabet designs or methods for correct letter spacing.

Group I:

(C) Typefaces very common on most sign types of the historic period (especially wooden signs over six feet in horizontal length) are illustrated below:

Roman

Typeface 1

* Serif elements were often formed into the shape of triangles (see page 121 for a variation)

San serif

Typeface 2

Block with serif and rounded corners

Typeface 3

San serif block with rounded corners

Typeface 4

Typeface 5

Block with serif and 45° corners

DP 49
TM 34,48

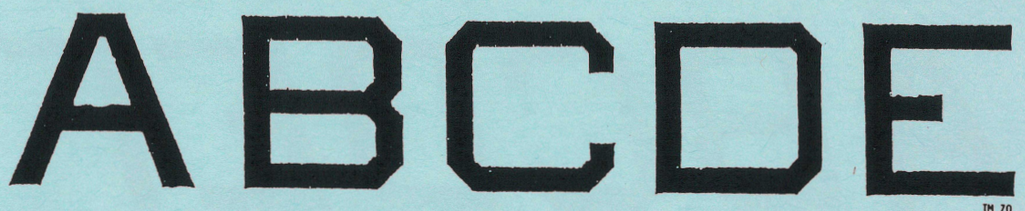
Typeface 6

Condensed san serif block with 45° corners

BN 82
SMHD 73/262/01

Typeface 7

San serif block with 45° corners



TM 70

Group II

(C) The following are typefaces common to wooden signs over six feet in horizontal length.

Typeface 8

Roman family (Broadguage)

DP 44
TM 45

Roman family
(Tuscan Antique)

Typeface 9

Roman family

Typeface 10

Slanted san
serif block

Typeface 11

Roman family

Typeface 12

Group III:

Typefaces rarely used on wooden signs over six feet in horizontal length or wall mounted signs are listed below. Note, however, that these typefaces were commonly used on canvas drop shades and window shades.

Typeface 13

Roman family (Ornamented)

The above typeface features an interior design as an option. This element of sign design is discussed under TYPEFACE INTERIORS.

Typeface 14

Roman family (Ionic)

Typeface 15

Roman family (Ornamented)

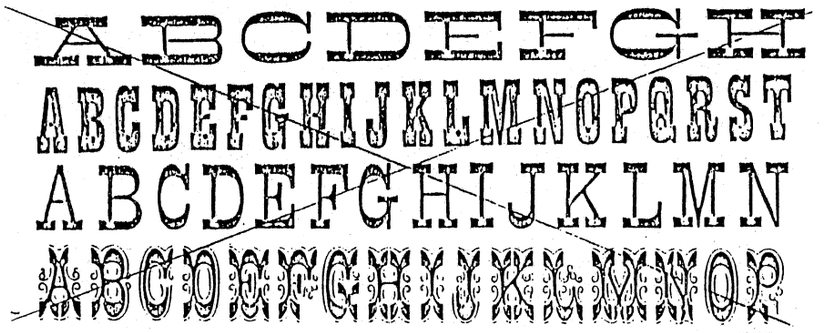
Typeface 16

San serif block family (Ornamented)

1. While this is not a comprehensive list, it does indicate the most common styles used during the historic period interpreted by Old Sacramento. Other typefaces may be judged acceptable, but will be reviewed for use on a case-by-case basis. The use of script and ornate typefaces will be severely restricted.

m. Some typefaces promoted today as being typical of the historic period were in reality rarely used during the era depicted in Old Sacramento.

(1) A popularly held misconception is that the Barnum family of typefaces, characterized by bold upper and lower horizontal strokes with relatively thin vertical and intermediate horizontal strokes, was commonly used on exterior signs of the period. These typefaces were usually restricted to broadsides and other printed advertisements and were very rarely utilized on permanent exterior signs. These letter styles were so rare during the interpretive period that they have been placed in the unacceptable category.



KC 112
SMHD 83/36/03

(X)

Barnum

(2) In the late 1860's and early 1870's, new typestyles were introduced which incorporated flared and angular elements. Some of these typefaces included enlarged first letters which were often made more ornate. This was not characteristic of the majority of typestyles used from 1849-1875.

(R)

Examples of enlarged and more ornamental first letters. →

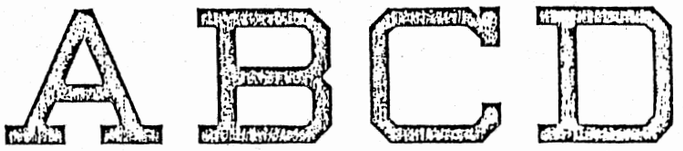
A. TYPEFACE INTERIORS

Within the basic outline of a letter, there is a range of possible design variations.

a. Type was most commonly solid, either dark on a light background or light on a dark background.

(C)

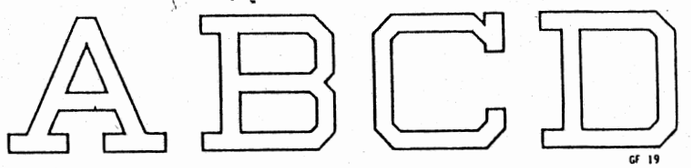
Solid



b. Outlined lettering was recommended by some sign design authors when painting colored letters on a colored background. Also for letters painted on glass (including some forms of street addresses), canvas drop shades, window curtain signs.

(R)

Outlined

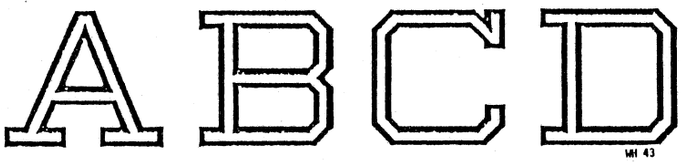


c. Rimmed lettering was rarely used except when painted on glass (including some forms of street addresses), canvas drop shades, window curtain signs.

(R)

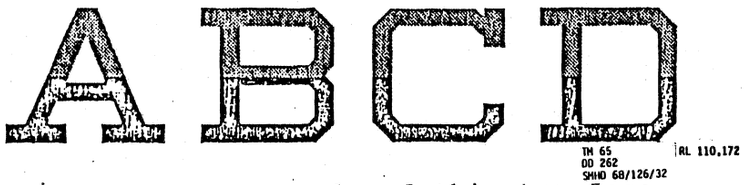
Rimmed

d. Inline lettering was limited to, but rarely used on, canvas drop shades, window curtain signs, or signs painted on glass (including some forms of street addresses).



Inline

e. Lettering of two or more colors was not used extensively during the historic period represented by Old Sacramento.



Two colors

Page 140 has an example of this typeface variation

f. Continuously changing color tone lettering was used only rarely in conjunction with canvas drop shades and window curtain signs.

g. Other variations in interior letter designs. These ranged from the use of circles, stars, box shapes and interior accents with curved diamond combinations as in typeface 13, introduced on page 79. See page 156 for another example.

These more elaborate letter style variations were normally used for signs painted on canvas drop shades, window curtains, and sometimes signs painted on glass.

h. Stylized or caricatured lettering was extremely rare for exterior signs during the historic period.

(X)

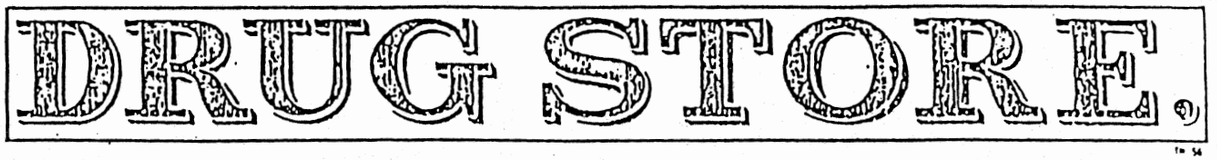
caricatured

An example of lettering being caricatured in the form of tree limbs. Caricatured lettering was used in printed material, but should be avoided for exterior signs.

B. LETTER BLOCKING, SHADING AND CAST SHADOWS*

Raised and recessed lettering were not common on signs used in Old Sacramento during the period interpreted by the District.** Carved wooden signs were not used.*** Although structure names and construction dates were sometimes produced in raised or incised lettering, for the purpose of this manual, they will be considered part of a building's architectural design. Flat surfaces were given depth or relief by painting lettering in perspective. During the 19th Century this was called giving thickness or blocking to letters.

An example of letter blocking (blocking type #6) on a large sign.



The idea was to deceive the eye of the spectator into thinking the lettering stood out from the face of the sign. This optical illusion was occasionally attempted for a recessed affect, however, this was usually less successful in fooling the eye and not recommended by some sign design authors of the historic period.

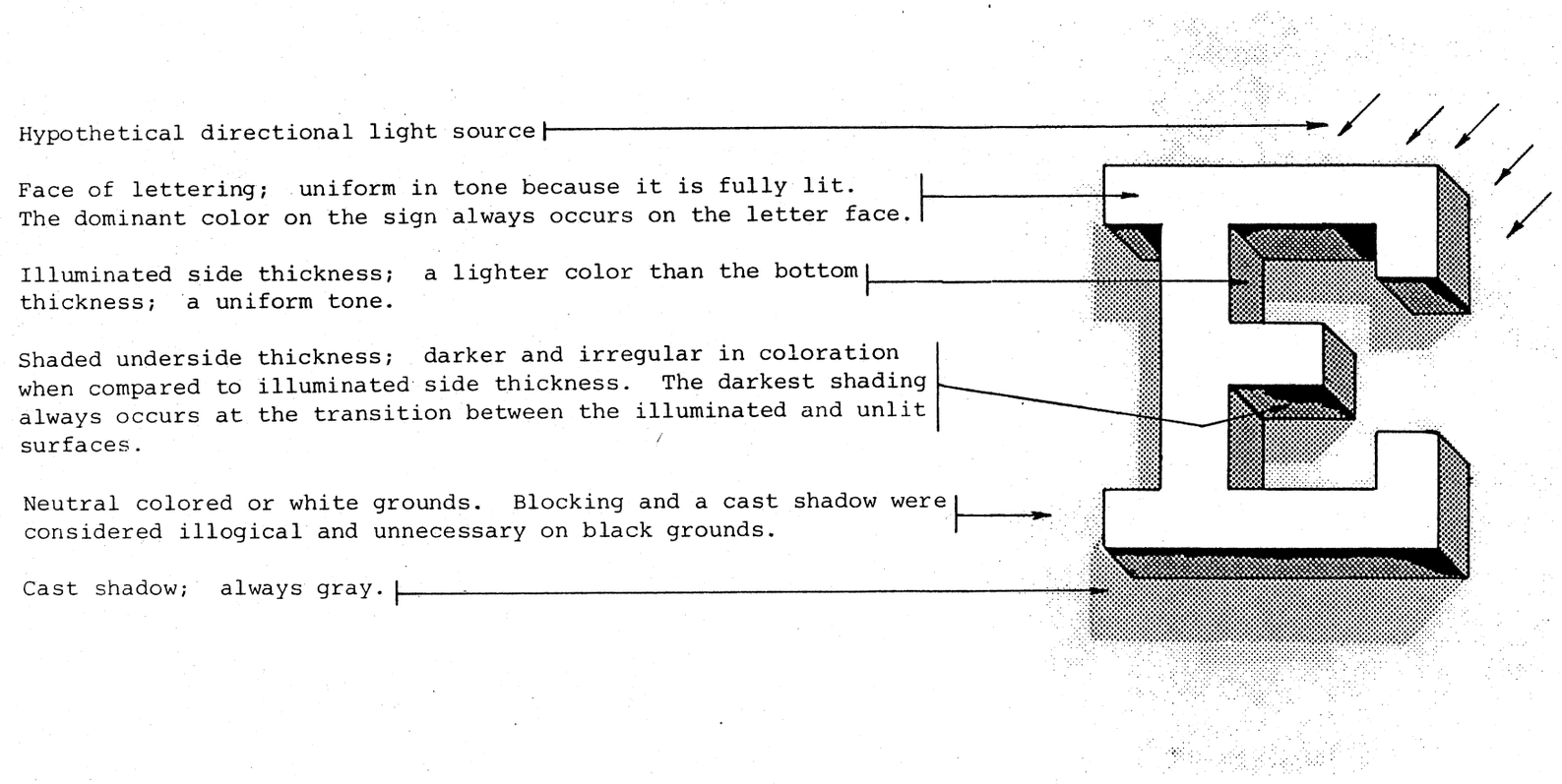
*Blocking was considered a novelty in 1841, but became very popular by the 1870's. Shading and cast shadows are not possible without blocking. The visual illusion of blocking with shading and cast shadows is known technically as chiaroscuro. This treatment was commonly used during the 19th Century not only on signs but also to create raised panel details and ornamentation on flat surfaces.

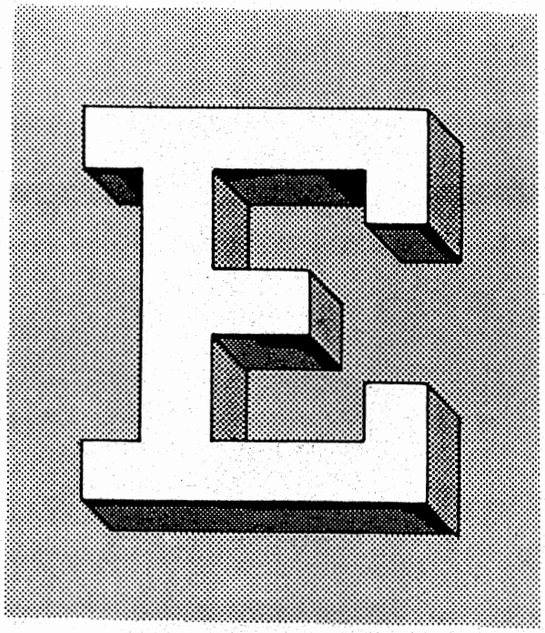
**During the 19th Century, cut out letters with beveled faces were occasionally used on very large signs. These signs usually occured above the second floor. For this reason, signs with raised letters will not be permitted for use with today's modern-use commercial signs.

***Carved wood signs were used to advertise a wood carver. Commercial carvers were usually associated with ship construction during the 19th Century.

Several varieties of blocking were used during the historic period. They ranged from extremely convincing shaded and shadowed artwork to token efforts to convey projected lettering from a flat surface. Illustrated below are some of the most popular blocking types used during the years 1849-75.

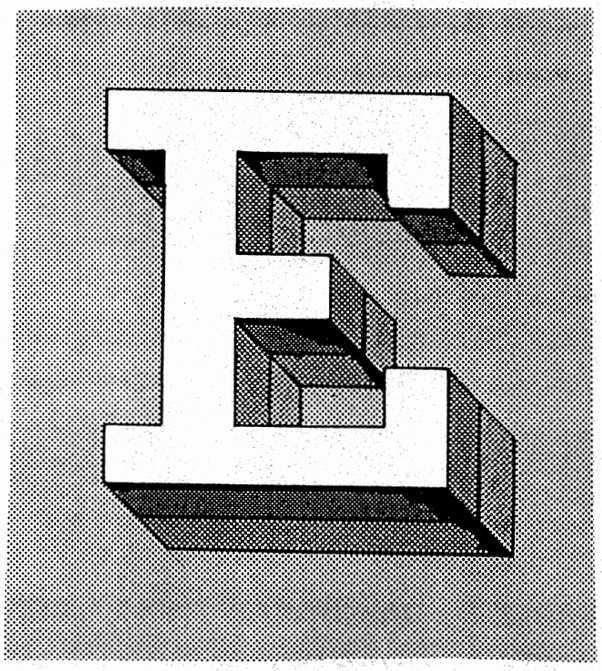
(1) Letter blocking with shading and cast shadow. This is the most realistic and complex format. Sophisticated signs of the 1870's commonly used this treatment.


Hypothetical directional light source
Face of lettering; uniform in tone because it is fully lit. The dominant color on the sign always occurs on the letter face.
Illuminated side thickness; a lighter color than the bottom thickness; a uniform tone.
Shaded underside thickness; darker and irregular in coloration when compared to illuminated side thickness. The darkest shading always occurs at the transition between the illuminated and unlit surfaces.
Neutral colored or white grounds. Blocking and a cast shadow were considered illogical and unnecessary on black grounds.
Cast shadow; always gray.



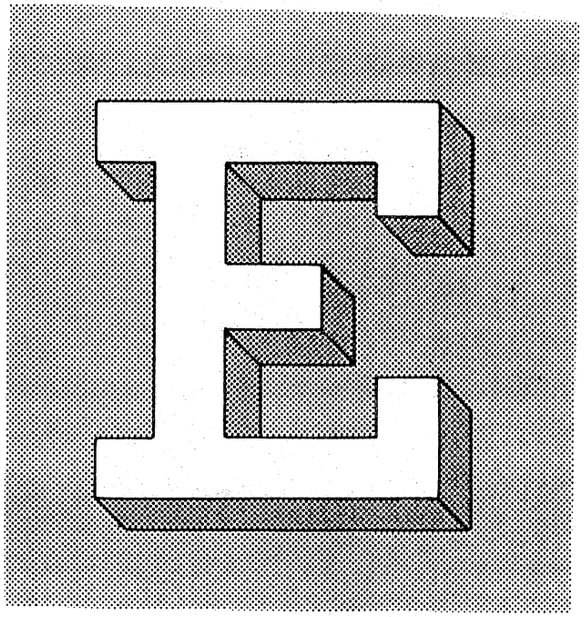
While the example on page 88 demonstrates blocking, shading and shadows in its most realistic form, other less sophisticated blocking techniques were also used during the 19th Century. These were usually less successful in conveying a projected feeling for a set of letters, but were useful in setting off words and creating typeface variety on a sign.

(2) Letter blocking with shading, but without a cast shadow.

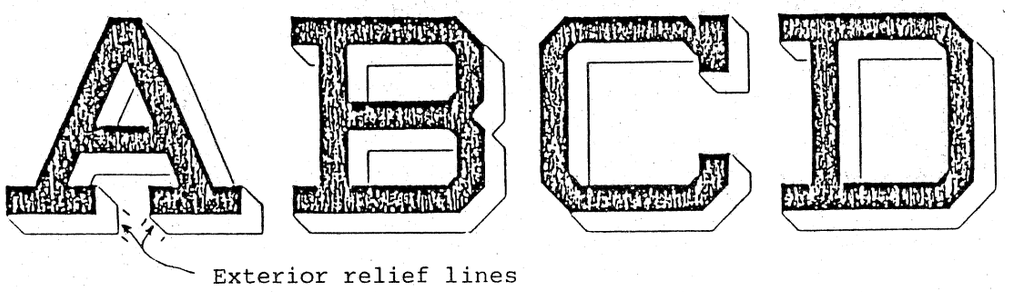


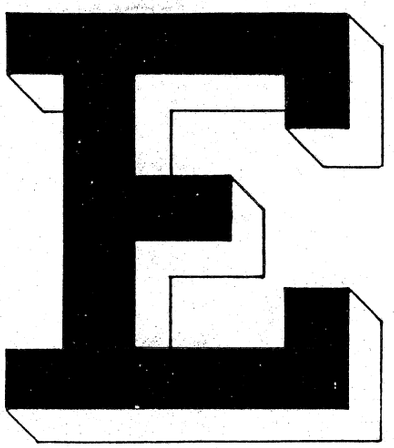
(3) "Double shading". Actually lettering with double blocking with shading but without a cast shadow. The blocking closest to the letter face is always the dominant and darkest of the two thicknesses.

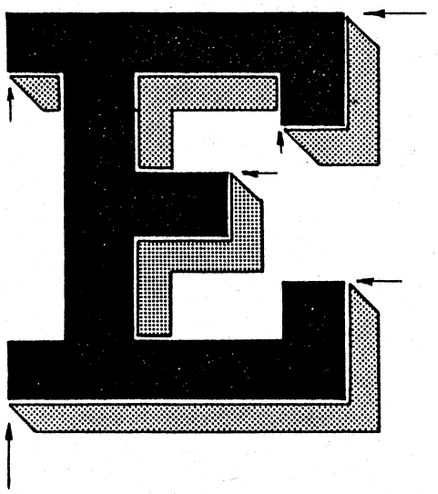
(4) Letter blocking without shading or cast shadow.



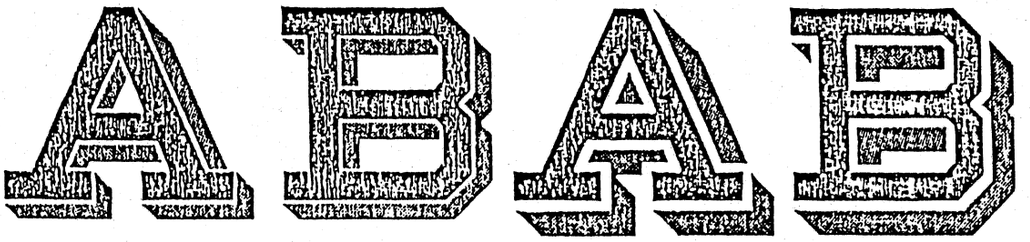
(5) Outlined blocking without interior relief lines. See page 92 for an explanation of interior relief lines.



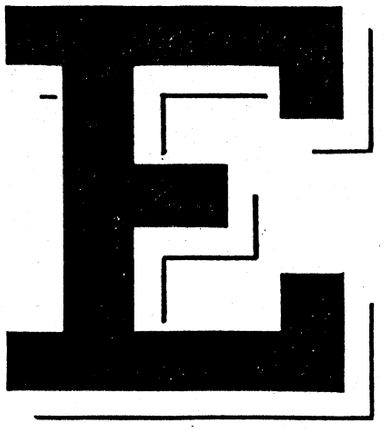




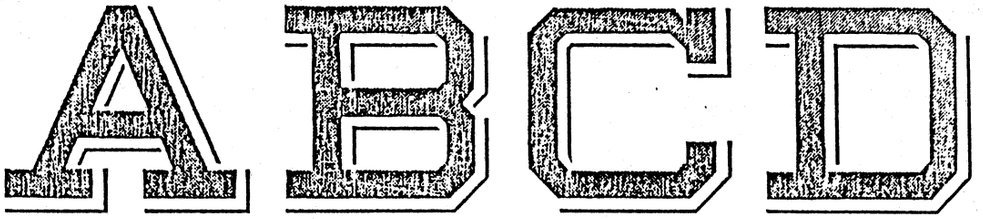
(6) Solid blocking without shading or a cast shadow, separated by a narrow strip of the sign's ground color. Special note should be taken regarding the beginning of the blocking feature relative to the letter at the projecting corners. See arrows. The degree of blocking separation from the letter varied as indicated by the following examples.



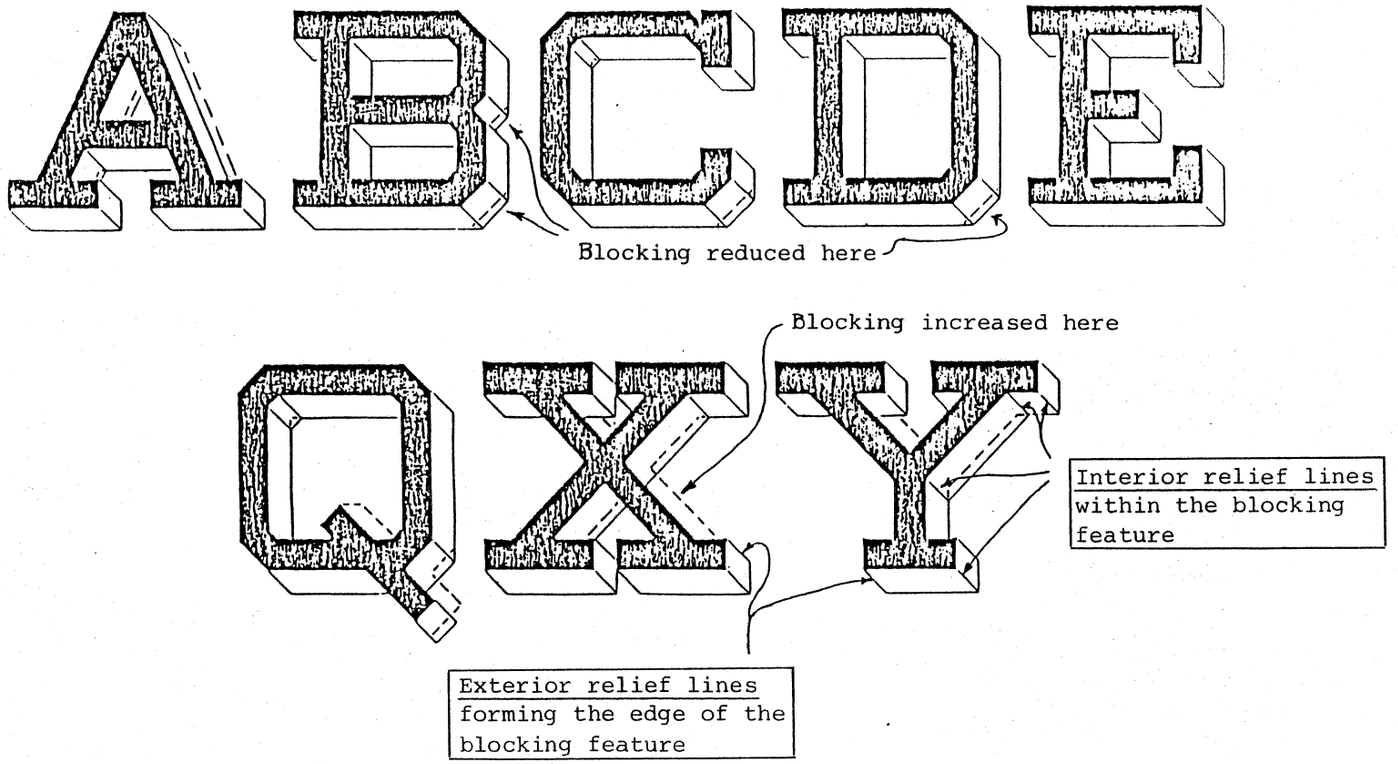
Blocking separated by a thin line Blocking separated by a wide line



(7) Outline blocking without exterior relief lines. See page 92 for an explanation of exterior relief line. The weight of the outline may vary. Also note the relative relationship between letter elements and the beginning of the paralleling blocking line. In the example below the blocking lines begin and end even with the letter corners.



. The dashed lines illustrate common modifications made to perspective relief for certain types of blocking. Sign painters commonly modified true prespective by exaggerating or reducing shading. These alterations were particularly used to provide optically consistent shadows for letter elements which would look awkward and unbalanced without modification.


Blocking reduced here
Blocking increased here
Interior relief lines within the blocking feature
Exterior relief lines forming the edge of the blocking feature

. The most common direction for the blocking feature to be developed was usually down and to the right of a letter at approximately 30° to 45°. The next most common direction was down and left, and more rarely, straight down, to the uppper right, or to the upper left.

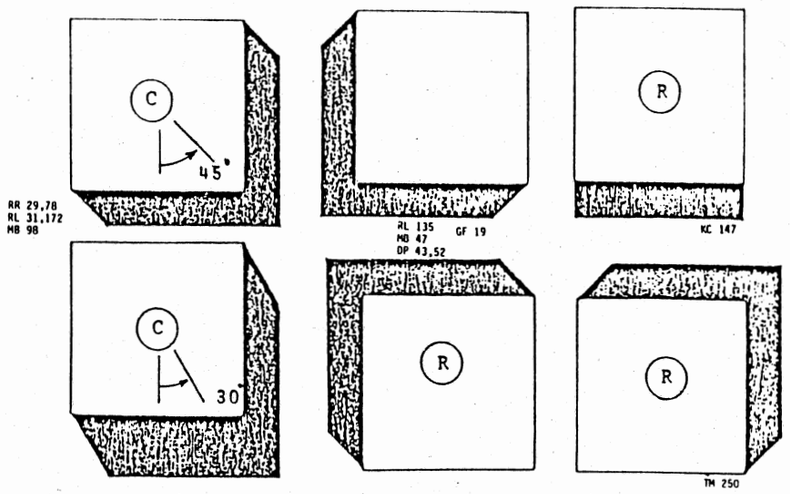
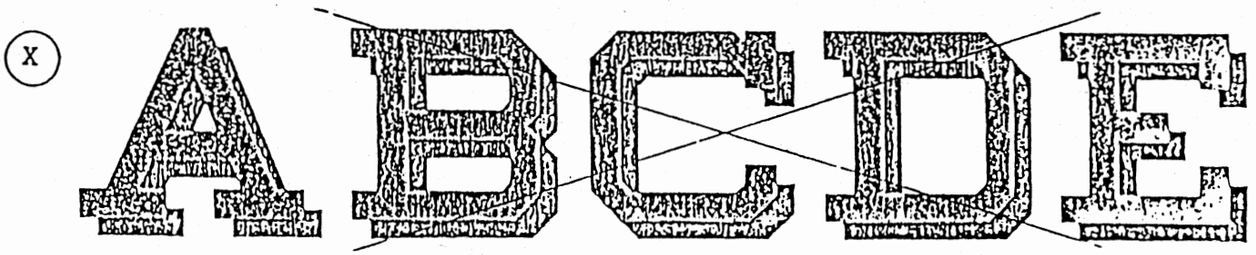


Diagram indicating proper direction of blocking development.

• Letter blocked to depict a realistic shadow such as would be cast by a two dimensional letter set out from the sign's surface, is inappropriate for the historic period.



. Only one line of a sign's text should use blocked lettering.

. Letter blocking should only be developed in one direction on a line of type. Blocking did not change direction midway across a line of text. Each letter should be drawn individually using the same angles for the edges of the thickness feature.

. There are two cardinal rules which must be followed when using blocking, shading and cast shadows in combination.

    I. The brightest light gradually looses its force as it recedes from the eye, and at the remotest distance becomes a slight shade.

    II. The darkest shadow gradually looses its intensity as it recedes from the eye, until it becomes altogether indistinguishable.*

. When dark-colored lettering is used on a dark background, greater contrast can be created with light-colored thickness.

. Many of the alphabets in Appendix A are shown with outline blocking. These alphabet are meant to serve as lettering guides, presenting only one of several possibilities for letter thickness. Solid blocking with or without letter separation was more common than the outlines blocking illustrated in Appendix A.

Source: Chapter VI, Thickness and shadows; pp. 97-114, Sign Writing and Glass Embossing, by James Callingham, 1871 Philadelphia

Chapter XII, Shading; pp. 104-110. The Complete Carriage and Wagon Painter, by Fritz Schriber; 1907, New York

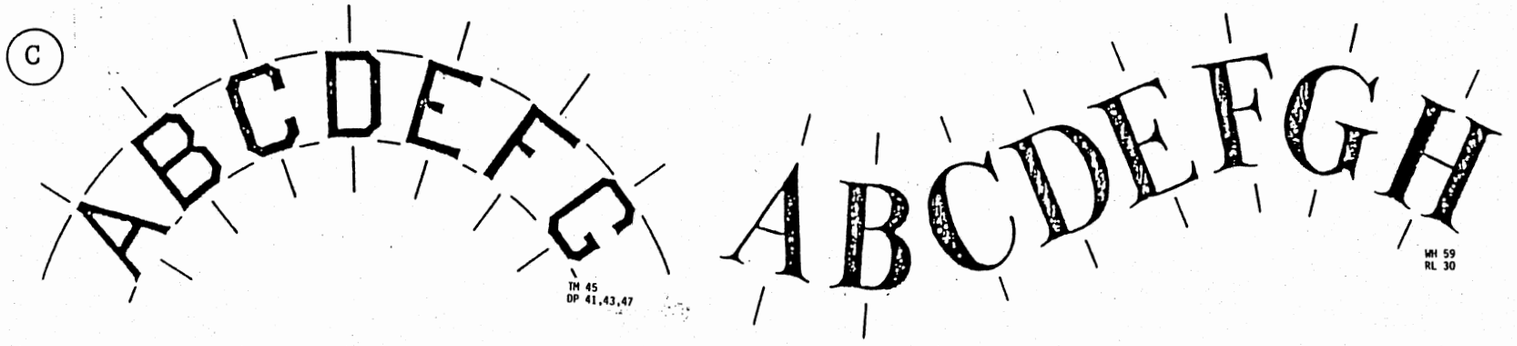
* page 107 Sign Writing, J. Callingham

C. LETTERING ON CURVES

Historically there were three methods for developing lettering on curves:

(1) Each letter of a word on a curve was laid out perpendicular to the curved segment on which it fell. Using this technique individual letters do not become distorted because of their location on the curve.

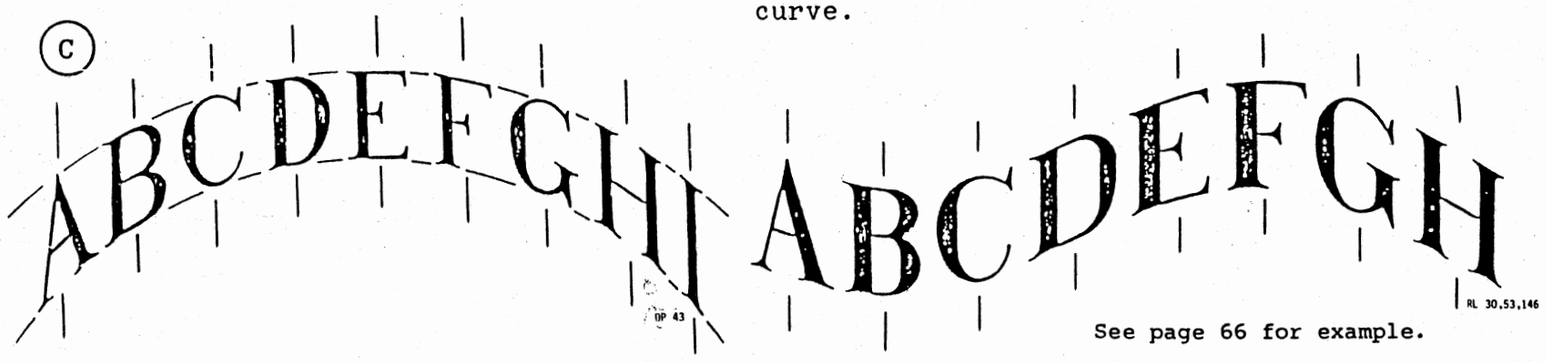
Curve method 1



See page 43 for an example of use.

(2) Lettering was laid out on a curve with the vertical strokes always remaining upright, while the horizontal strokes followed the curve.

Curve method 2

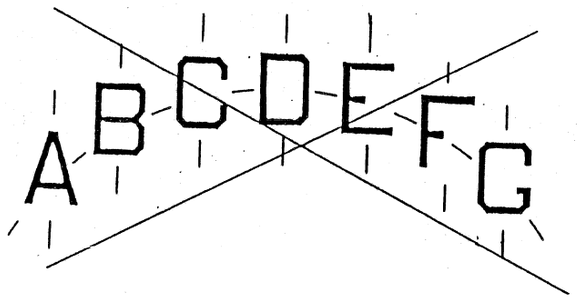


See page 66 for example.

(3) A combination of methods 1 and 2 was sometimes used on "S"-d or arched words. The first method being used for portions of words developed in a downward direction, while the second was used for lettering on upward curving portions of words. The combination of methods 1 and 2 created a forward flowing effect.

Curve method 3 combines methods 1 and 2

(4) Letters were very rarely aligned in a totally vertical format along a curve in the historic period represented by Old Sacramento.



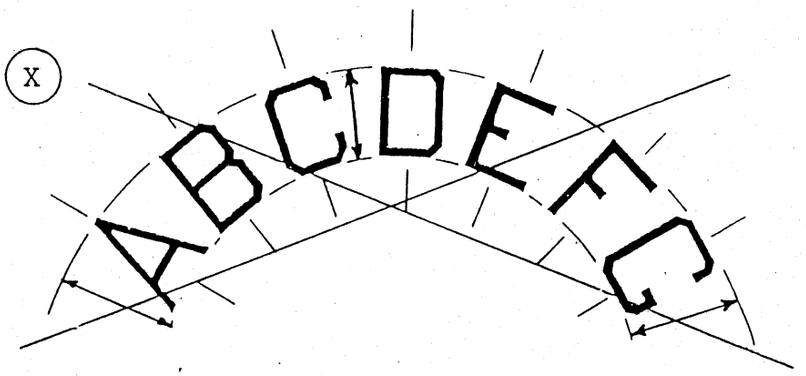
(X)

a. Words must be confined to shallow curves to avoid major lettering distortion.

b. Letter height grows as a word angles up or down. This can be compensated for by slightly decreasing the vertical dimensions of a letter at curve extremes.

c. Lettering should not be purposely expanded vertically when using either word curve method 1 or 2.

Lettering expanded vertically at curve extremes is incorrect



d. Lettering may be sloped forward or backwards at the same time curve method 2 is used.

Lettering could be sloped 10^{o}-20^{o} forward or backward with curve method 2

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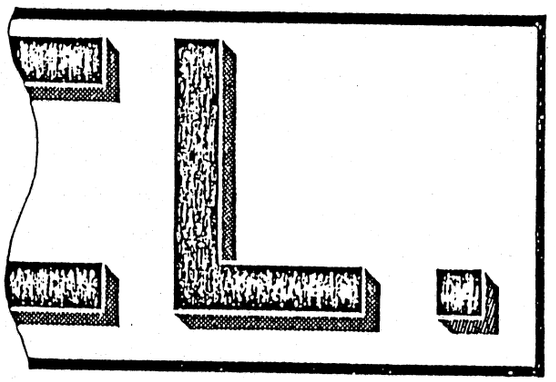
2. PUNCTUATION

(C)

Regardless of whether or not a statement formed a complete sentence, historically, a period was placed at the end of each sign statement. Periods should also be included in signs prepared today for Old Sacramento. They should be painted in the same color and type style as the last word of each message.



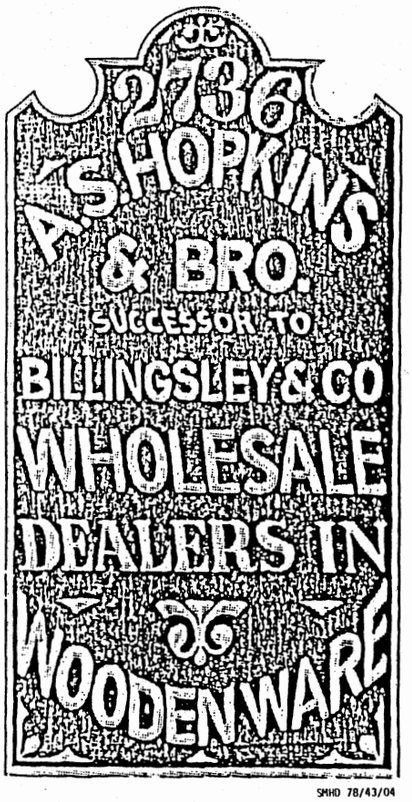
Commas were occasionally used to separate phases on a sign such as the owners name from his merchandise line. An example is W.S.CHESSMAN, DRUGGIST. Commas were sometimes used on signs listing products or services. In most cases, however, commas were un-necessary on these advertisements because of the variety of letter styles used.

3. STREET NUMBERS ON SIGNS

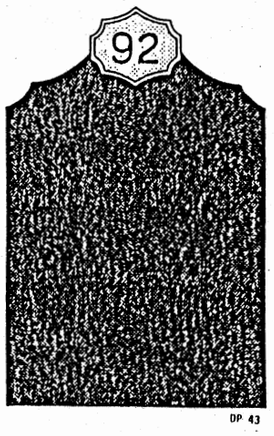
Street address numbers were often incorporated into a sign's design. The name of a street, the word "street" or its abbreviation, however, was never used. Street addresses should only be placed at specific locations within sign formats.

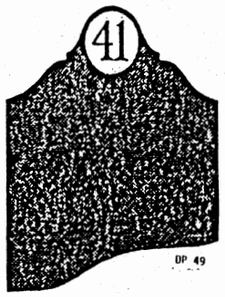
1. Vertically Oriented Signs

   Usually numerals were placed at the top, bottom or optical center of a vertical sign. See pages 143 and 148 for other examples.



Example of a wall mounted sign with a street number centered at the top.





The curved metal vertically oriented wall signs often incorporated the street address centered at the top encircled by a decorative design.

2. Large horizontal signs

On large horizontal signs installed parallel to the street, the street number was either placed at both ends of the signboard (common) or centered (rare). On signs spanning a sidewalk, street numbers were often placed only at the street end of a sign. The number was often set off from the rest of the sign's design by one of the following:

1) A slightly different type size.

2) A different letter style.

3) "S"-curving the numbers (sometimes within a ribbon).

4) Rotating the numbers.

5) Sloping the numbers forwards or backwards.

6) Encircling the numbers with a decorative design. (Such as ovals or rectangles with corners rounded or concave in shape.)

7) A combination of 1 through 6.

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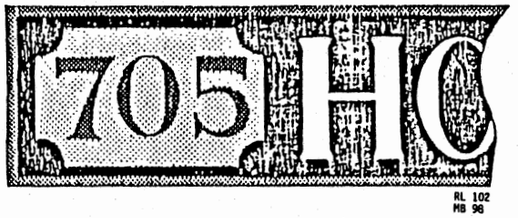
Note: During the 19th Century, large businesses commonly adopted more than one street number for their location designation. When two street numbers are used on a sign, as in the "John Breuner" sign, they may be different reflecting the first and last number on a street frontage the business occupies.

BN 80

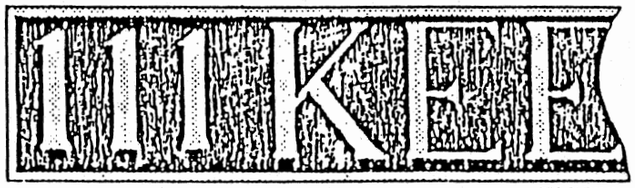


RL 102
MB 98

GF 12(8)

DP 41

Enlarged Accent



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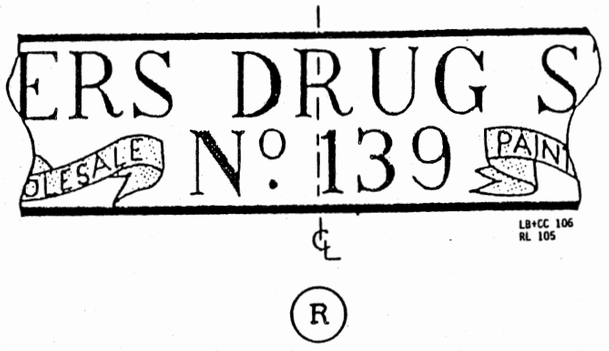
Note:
Street numbers at both ends of a sign are always executed in a symetrical mirror image format to each other.

DP 43
MB 9



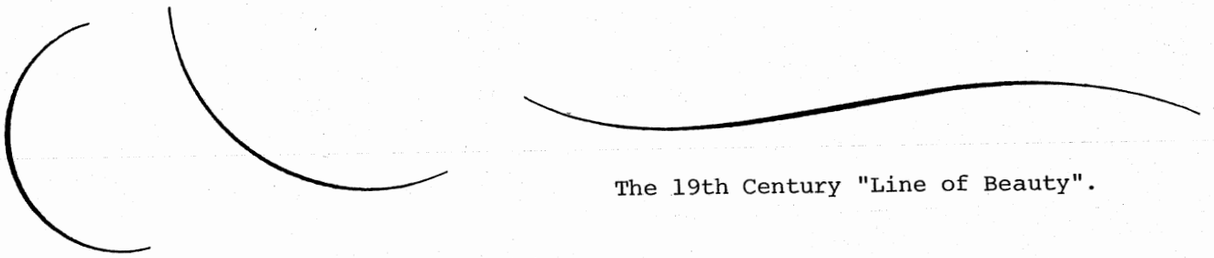
3. Periodically, product symbols received street numbers as their only non-symbolic message. Page 21 has further information on graphic images and product symbols.

The pocket watch, a product symbol for a jeweler, also includes the street number.

4. CURVILINEAR ACCENTS

Curvilinear accents fill voids on signs where word layouts do not quite fit the available space. In addition, accents were also used to emphasize a particular word in a sign's message and to divide messages on vertical signs. Illustrated below are curvilinear accent designs used throughout the years 1849 through 1870.

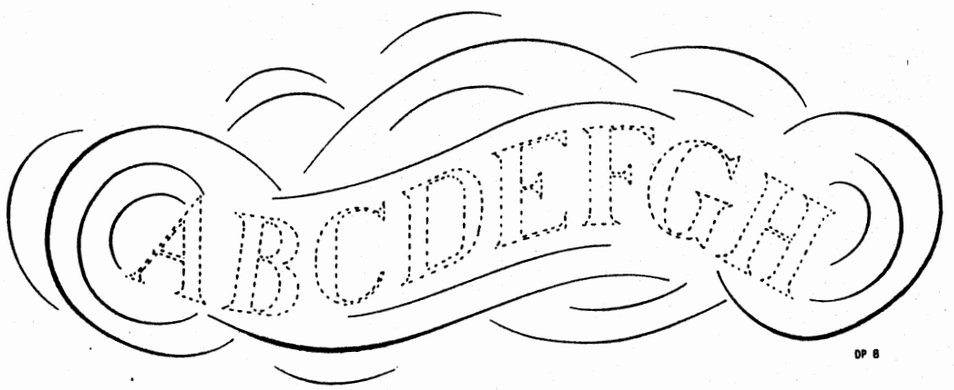
(C)



Curvilinear accents were commonly arcs or flattened "S" shapes.

The 19th Century "Line of Beauty".

a. The illustration below is an extreme example of embellishment rarely employed on exterior sign work. Historically, sign copy was almost always enlarged to its maximum possible size before curvilinear accents were applied.

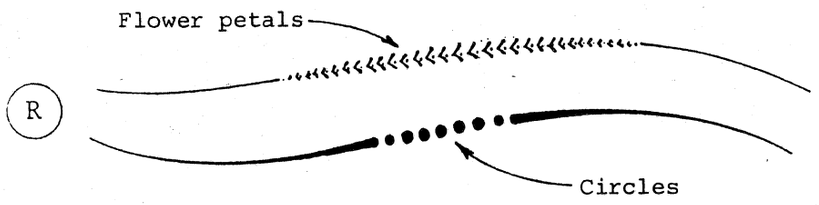


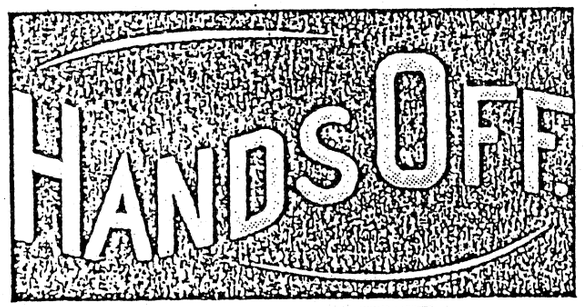
An example of a word emphasized with curvilinear accents.

b. Curvilinear accents generally can be used when words are curved, or "S"'d and are found most often on vertical sign formats.

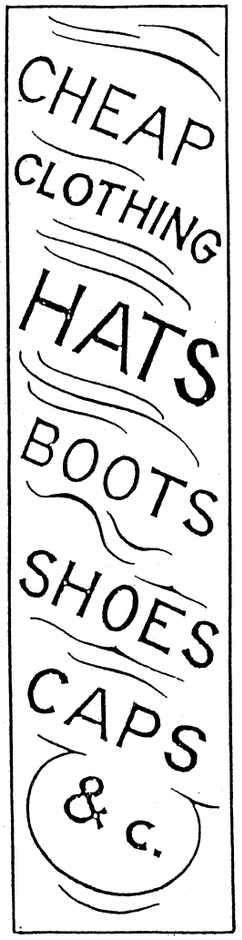
c. Curvilinear accents generally parallel lettering and swirl in open areas of a sign's word layout. Each accent tapers from a broad stroke in the center to slender lines at its extremes. Sometimes an accent was peaked in the center, as in the apparel sign illustrated here. Occasionally, the peaked area was left vacant, as in the example of an accent to the extreme right. Accents often counterbalanced "S"'d words, while at the same time filling the voids on the signboard.

d. Curvilinear accents on rare occasion, substituted a design of circles or "flower petals" as in the examples below for the central broad stroke.





The curvilinear accents used here have counter balanced a word group.



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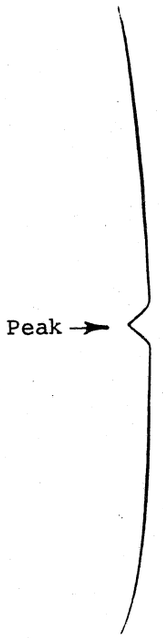
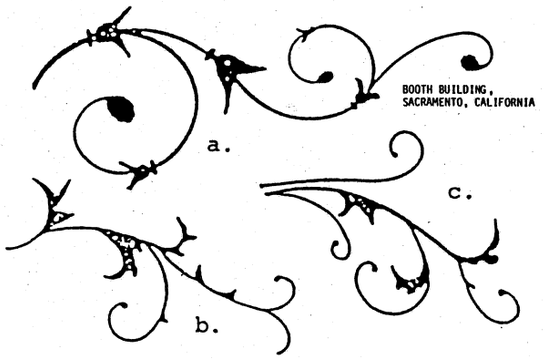
A casual word layout using curvilinear accents.

A peaked accent with peak left vacant

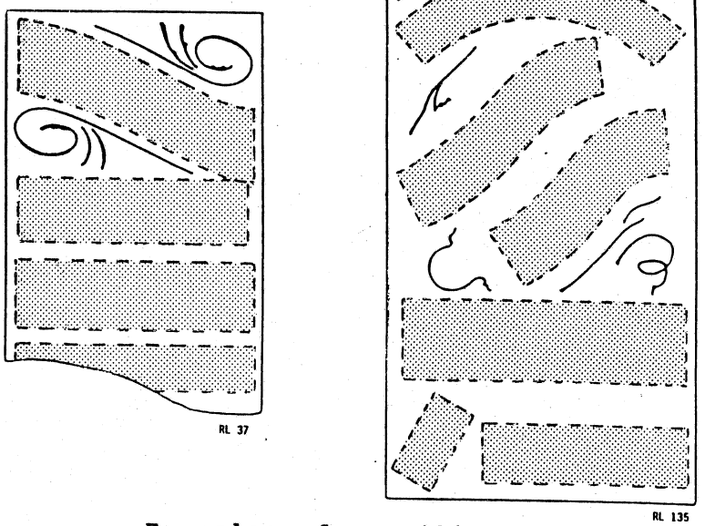


DP 43

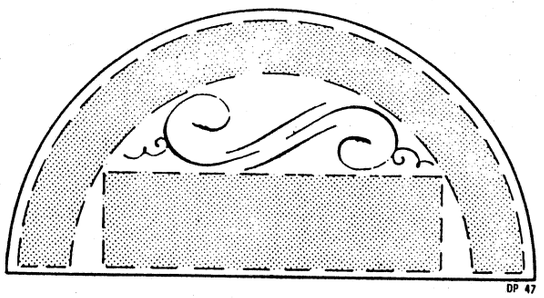


Three organically shaped accents (a-c).

e. Curvilinear accents could also reflect more organic forms such as vines and wheat heads with stems. Note the adjacent examples.



Examples of curvilinear accents used to fill space.



f. Curvilinear accents can take the form of narrow ribbons. The rule when creating ribbon accents is to thin the ribbon around sharp curves and broaden them in shallow curves.

g. Curvilinear accents should not be stylized in design other than those indicated in d,e and f above.

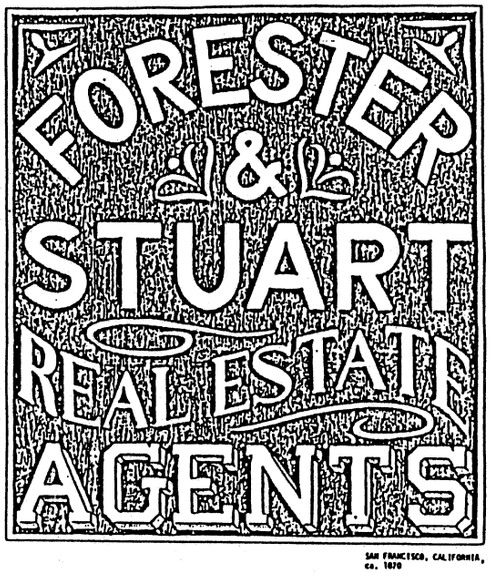
h. Curvilinear accents are supplements only and should not purposely be used to dominate a sign's design.

A ribbon accent

5. COLOR SCHEMES

Few original signs have survived from the 1849-1875 period. Nineteenth Century paintings and colored drawings which date from the interpretive period along with relative tonal values in historic photographs are the chief means available for estalishing typical sign color schemes of the era. In addition the published suggestions of several sign design authors of the 19th Century are available for comparison with the graphic record.

Caution should be used when viewing the illustrations contained within these sign guidelines. Values of gray have been achieved through a screening process, however, a screened pattern (i.e. dots) should not be used on actual signs within the District.



A typical color scheme for a wall mounted sign.

Listed below are some of the known facts and recommendations regarding sign painting and color schemes:

- All wooden surfaces should be painted (including wooden sign frames); no part of a sign should be left unpainted.
- Stains were not commonly used on exterior signs.
- Paints should have a gloss or semi-gloss finish.
- Florescent, iridescent, and other super bright colors are not typical of the historic period and should not be used.
- Sign colors were not normally coordinated with a store's interior or exterior paint scheme.
- During the 1850's and 1860's the predominant color scheme for a large framed sign was dark lettering (often black) on a white background. The frame with this scheme was almost always painted a darker color (black).
- An alternative scheme for large framed and unframed signs was the reverse of the above. This scheme became the most popular by the 1870's.
- Wall mounted signs had predominantly dark backgrounds with light colored lettering and trim.
- Gold leaf was commonly used on signs painted on glass, including street addresses.
- Metal sign hardware was often painted black.

The principle paint colors used on exterior signs during the 19th Century are listed below. Selection of colors was based in part on aesthetics of the interpretive period but also on fade resistance, durability, opaqueness and transparency of each paint. Thinner paints were generally used in tinting thicker based colors and in applying transparent coatings over other colors to shade the letter "thickness" and to make artifical shadows. The original paints were lead based. Lead based pigments are no longer available. Approximations of these colors must be made based on modern paint systems.

White lead - a thick pure white paint.

Flake white or zinc white - a finer ground pure white paint used for final white finishes.

Chrome yellow - a bright yellow; used to make many tints of yellow with the addition of white.

Yellow ochre - a yellow not as brilliant as chrome yellow.

Raw sienna - a brownish yellow.

Burnt sienna - a rich transparent reddish brown used for shading and for glazing over gold leaf.

Vermillion - an intense and bright red; the most common red used by sign painters.

Indian red - a deep purple; a very thin paint.

Purple brown - a deep red.

Carmine - a medium red; not recommended by some authors because of fading.

Lake (crimson and scarlet) - a transparent red; used as a glaze over other colors and as a tint.

Rose madder - a pale rose pigment.

Ivory black - the purest and deepest of blacks.

Vegetable black - not quite as intense a black as ivory black.

French ultramarine - a brilliant blue; permanent; easily worked; offers a variety of blue tints when mixed with white.

Prussian blue - a color not quite as brilliant as french ultramarine; requires white to lighten when used as grounds (otherwise the pigment looks black).

Vandyke brown - a rich transparent brown used in glazing.

Emerald green - the most vivid of greens.

Gold leaf or gilt - technically not a paint but commonly used for sign lettering.

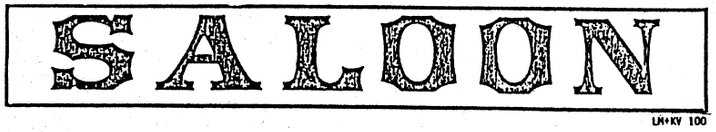
The following colors were historically of lesser importance:

Red lead - a nonperminent paint (turns grey).

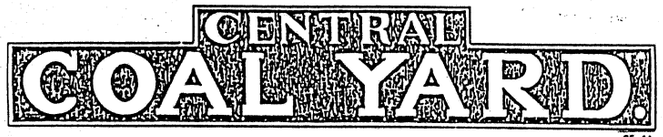
Light red

Venettian red

During the 1850's and 1860's black lettering on white grounds or vice versa, were considered the most attractive color combinations.



LM+KV 100



GF 11

Definitions:

Primary colors . . . . . Yellow Red Blue

Secondary colors . . . . . Orange Green Purple

Tertiary colors. . . . . Citron Russet Olive

Hue - a combination of primary colors. The pigment name actually refers to a range of colors. For example: blue plus yellow equals green. The color green can appear as an almost pure blue at one extreme or yellow at the other. The color in all instances is still called green.

Tint - adding white to a primary, secondary, or tertiary color. For example: red plus white equals pink, carnation or salmon, depending on how much white is added.

Shade - adding black to a primary, secondary, or tertiary color. Red plus black equals chocolate.

Color harmony - a balanced use of primary colors (pure primary colors or in mixtures). A work in which all primary colors are present.

Grounds - the color used as a background for lettering.

The following are recommended color combinations for exterior signs. These reflect what was considered "good taste" for the mid 19th Century. A special note should be made concerning black and white paint pigments. These two paints were not considered colors in the same sense as colors from the primary, secondary or tertiary groups. Black and white pigments have a neutral quality in regard to compatability with other paint colors. Color harmony was therefore, less of a concern when black or white are used for either grounds or lettering.

Recommended Color Combination

Grounds	Lettering
White ← (C) →	. Black . Any color but yellow; letter thickness may be red, green or blue. Shadow must be gray. . Gold leaf with letter thickness any color except yellow (blue, red and green were the most common). . Red
Black (ivory black) ← (C) →	. White . Gold leaf . Emerald green + white . Carnation . Purple + white (secondary lines) . other tinted colors . Note: yellow and red were not recommended
Chocolate*	Many tinted letter colors possible and recommended. Best with thickness and shadow.
Indian red*	Many tinted letter colors possible and recommended. Best with thickness and shadow.
Purple*	Many tinted letter colors possible and recommended. Best with thickness and shadow.

Note: Letter "thickness" and "shadow" were not considered necessary or appropriate on black grounds.

*An important rule must be followed when using colored grounds. One color must not be in direct contact with another color. Colored lettering must be separated from colored grounds by means of gold, black or white line at the perimeter of the letters. Sign's using black or white grounds do not require an outline because these two pigments are not considered colors.

(X) Vermillion	
Considered too bright to be used as grounds	
Dark blue*	. White (pure white) (a black cast shadow adds strength to the lettering).
Bronze-green*	. Gold with a vermillion or emerald green thickness (blue thickness is to be avoided).
Stone color*	. Any color lettering but yellow . With black lettering the thickness should be white on the illuminated side and stone color (darker than the grounds on the bottom). The cast shade is usually a mixture of burnt umber, yellow ochre and white.
Red*	. Gold leaf letters with black thickness with carmine shade.
Light colored grounds*	. Blue with gilt thickness and outline.
Marbeled (a painted surface simulating stone)	
. Black gold marbel	. White
. Green marble	. Carnation lettering with gilt outline with gilt or yellow thickness with black shade
. Non-green or black gold marbels	. Emerald green letters with carnation thickness (sides). . Vermillion lettering and purple brown (undersides) on shaded thickness; gold outline.
Wood graining (a painted surface simulating wood)	. Many possibilities
. Rose wood	. Gold letters, yellow ochre and white thickness with shadow
. Light colored woods	. Selection of a letter color more difficult because both light and dark colors are used in the graining process.

Other recommendations and suggestions:

- One source recommends using vermillion for blocking and glazing the underside in shadow with carmine.
- With double shading; sides of thickness vermillion, underside thickness indian red, the second blocking is created by covering half the thickness with carmine.
- The darkest shaded blocking always occurs nearest the letter.
- The most intense and prominent color should be put on the letter and not the blocking. Both the letter and blocking color should dominate the grounds.
- On gold leaf letters the blocking always touches the edge of the gold.
- A space was often left between painted letters and blocking.
- Black letters look well blocked with any of the primary colors.
- When the color used for the letter clashes with the blocking color; one author recommended separating the colors by a fine line consisting of the ground color.
- All gold lettering should be outlined on the opposite edge from the blocking or in some cases all around the letter.
- Cast shadows are seldom added except on white grounds.
- Cast shadows should always be gray.

Source: Chapter VIII, Colors used in sign writing and Chapter IX Hints on coloring, Sign Writing and Glass Embossing by James Callingham, 1871, Philadelphia.

Chapter XII, Shading, The Complete Carriage and Wagon Painter, by Fritz Schriber, 1907, New York.

6. PINSTRIPING AND SCROLLS

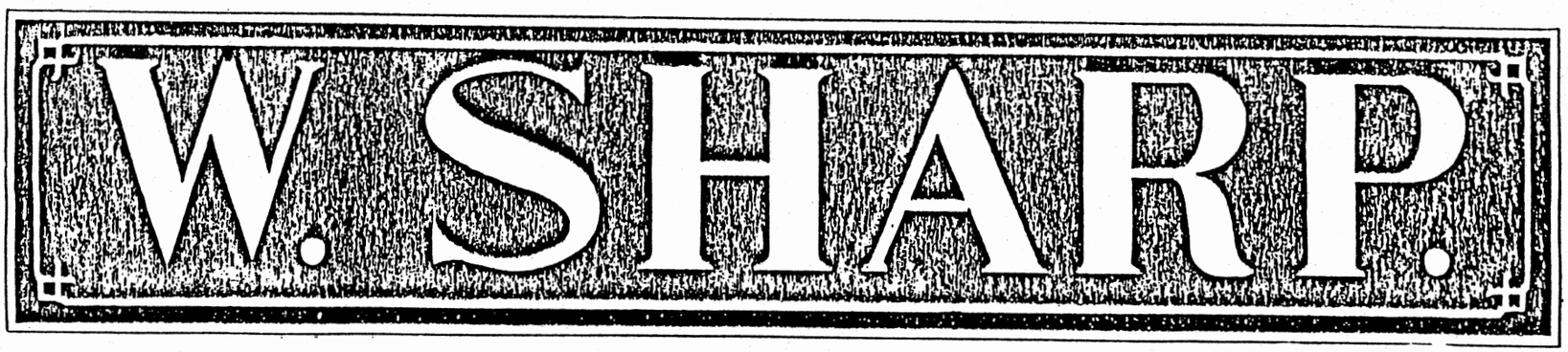
Pinstripes were periodically incorporated into the border designs of signs with dark field or background colors. Pinstriping was extremely rare on signs with light background paint schemes.

(1) Frameless signs almost always had pinstriped borders.

(2) Ornate geometric corner designs were common with pinstriping.

(3) Pinstriping is associated with "formal" word patterns.

Pinstriping was often used with Roman style lettering. A single line of Roman letters combined with fine pinstriping and a dark colored background created a refined sign appearance.



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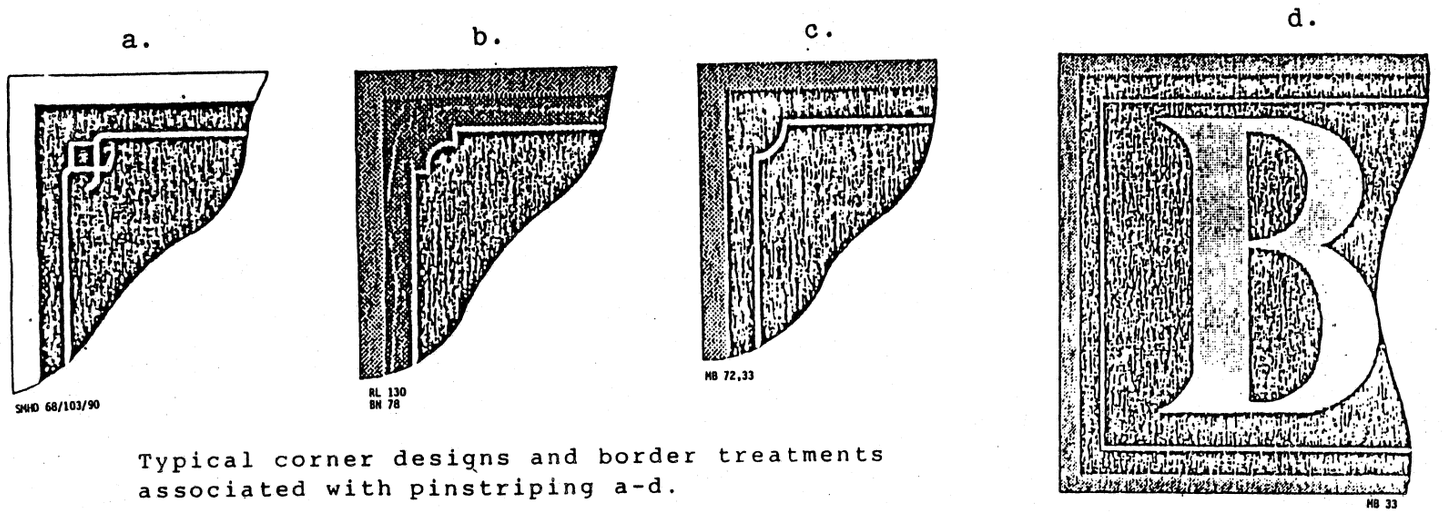
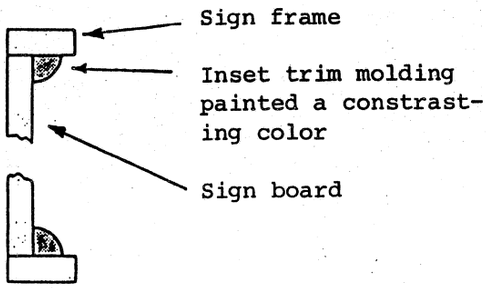
(4) Pinstriping can be used to separate two different background colors, as in example b.



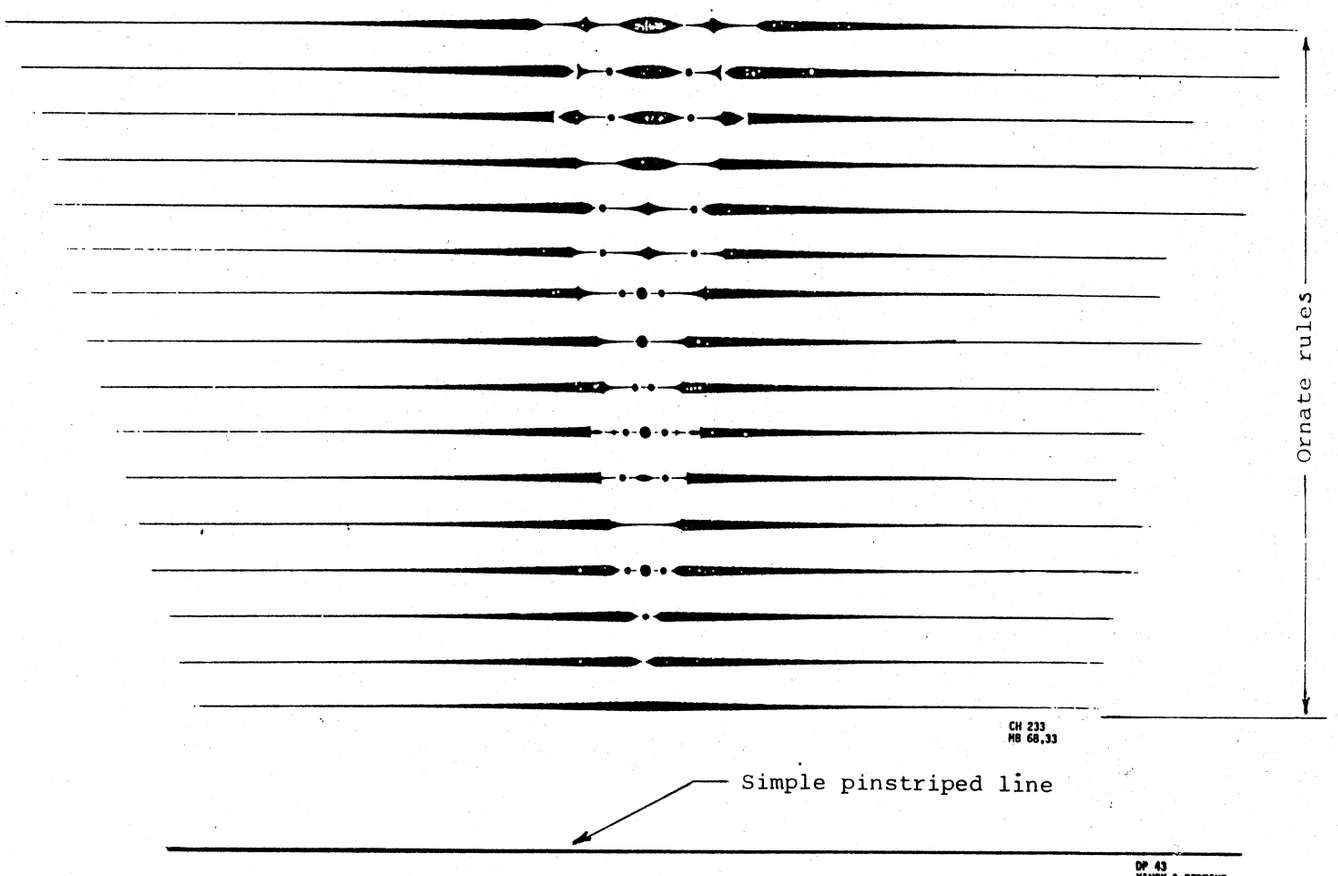
Typical corner designs and border treatments associated with pinstriping a-d.

(5) The inset wooden trim molding on the sign frame was sometimes painted a contrasting color in lieu of pinstriping.



Typical cross-section through a signboard frame with an inset trim molding.

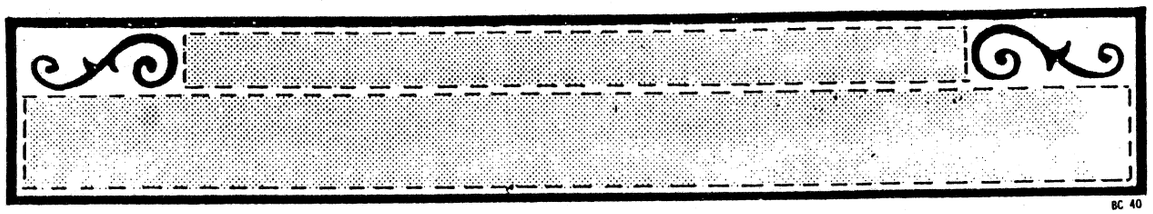
(6) A simple pinstriped line or a variation of the pinstripe known as an ornate rule was commonly used to separate lines of words on vertical signs. On horizontal signs, these devices were used vertically to set off street numbers at the ends of signboards. See page 103



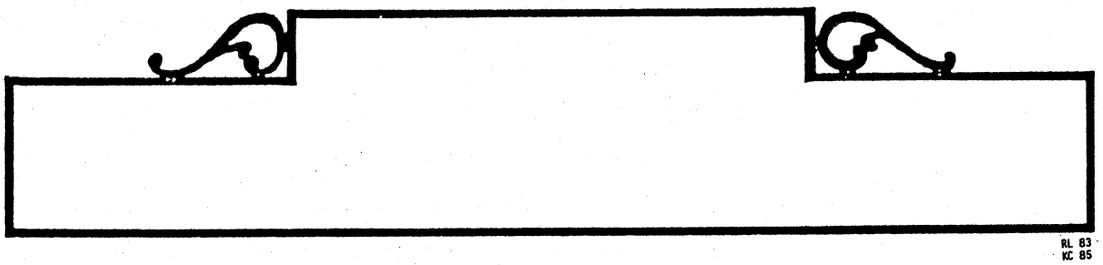
Ornate rules are primarily used to separate messages on vertically oriented signs. Turn to page 43 for illustration of ornate rules in use.

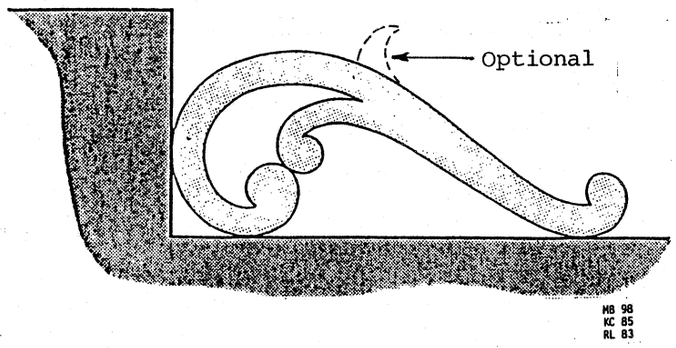
(7) Scrolls were used occasionally to provide a decorative transition or to fill space on signboards which contained unequal length lines of text. On signs with an integral upper cap, scrolls were used as free-standing cut-outs and usually painted white. See b. below.

(R) a. Scrolls used to fill space.



(R) b. Scrolls used as free standing cut-outs.



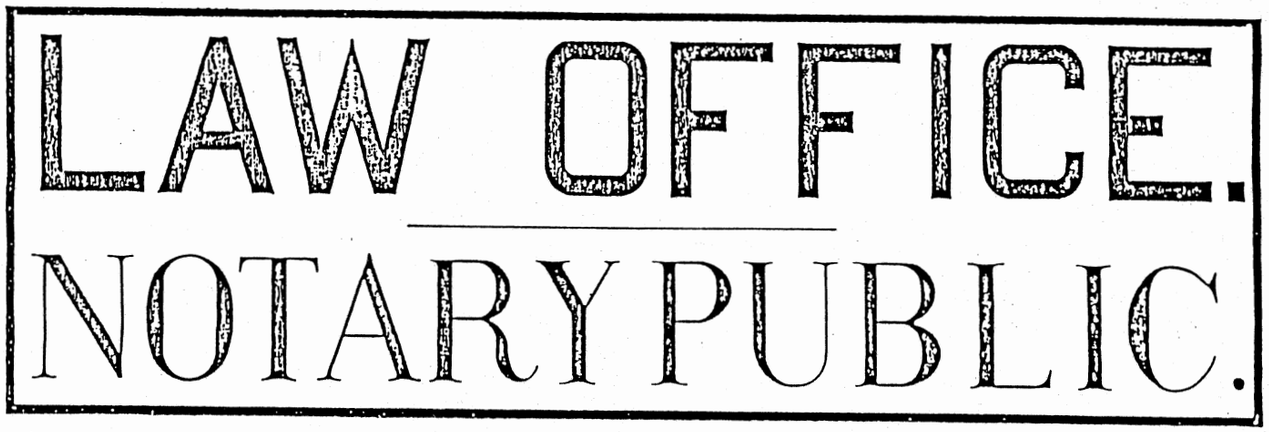


Enlarged free-standing scroll cut-out.

D. EVOLUTION OF SIGN STYLE AND DESIGN*

The Historic District's interpretive period represents Sacramento during 25 years from the earliest frontier period up to the time when the city was a well established trade center of the Central Valley. Signs evolved to reflect this difference in status while at the same time, styles and tastes across the nation gradually changed as well. A trend developed in favor of more sophisticated and complex sign designs and while the simpler earlier styles were still being used at the era's end, they were much less common.

*ALL APPROPRIATE SIGN TYPES OR CHARACTERISTICS LISTED IN THE GUIDELINES REPRESENTING THE YEARS 1849 TO 1875 MAY BE USED ON ANY BUILDING WITHIN THE OLD SACRAMENTO HISTORIC DISTRICT.



An 1850's sign.

An 1870's sign

Some of the changes during the period are noted below:

a. More space was left around the texts of some large signs of the 1850's than was common during the later years of the historic period.

b. Large frameless signs fell into disfavor after the 1860's; See page 138

c. Fine pinstriping, paralleling the framed area of large horizontal signs, was rare until the 1860's. See page 113

d. Multiple colors became more common by the mid 1870's.

e. In the 1870's, curved metal signs became more important as a means of advertising. This developed particularly into a popular method of advertising brewery products. See page 148

f. Large arched-top,wooden signs grew in importance in the 1870's. See page 140

g. By the 1870's, the use of words in a ribbon-like design element became less common.

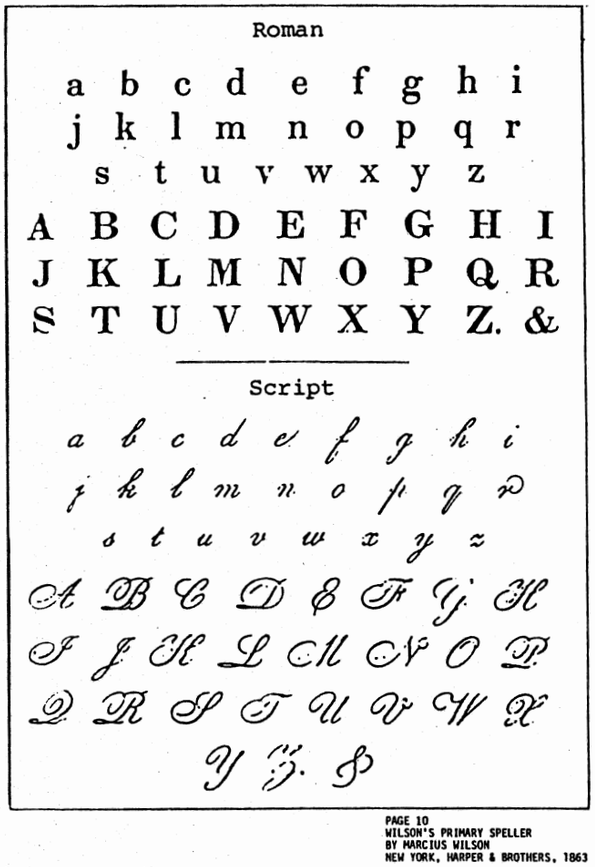
h. The use of letter blocking, shading and cast shadows became more prominent in the 1870's.

i. By the 1880's the majority of signs had dark-colored backgrounds with light-colored lettering.

j. Linear accents and word layouts with more angular and less flowing lines were introduced into sign design work towards the end of the interpretive period.

k. Differential enlargement of lettering in a word became an important space filling technique beginning in the early 1870's.

E. QUALITY OF WORKMANSHIP AND DESIGN

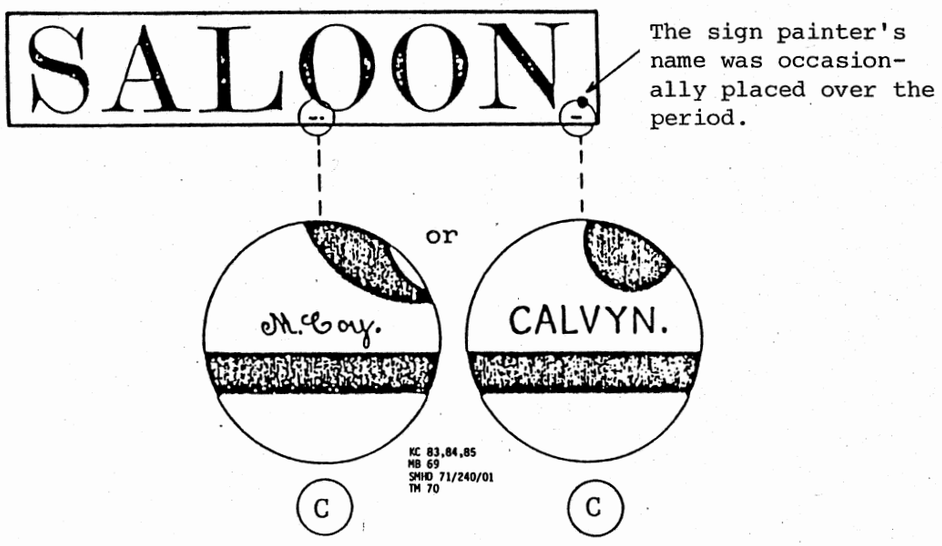

Roman
a b c d e f g h i
j k l m n o p q r
s t u v w x y z
A B C D E F G H I
J K L M N O P Q R
S T U V W X Y Z. &
Script
PAGE 10
WILSON'S PRIMARY SPELLER
BY MARCIUS WILSON
NEW YORK, HARPER & BROTHERS, 1863

Examples of handwritten Roman and script styles from the Old Sacramento interpretive period. See Appendix for appropriate block styles.

Generally, the workmanship of signs was consistently high. Individuals involved in the sign trade advertised themselves as sign writers or artists.

As with other artists and their creations, the sign artist's name was often incorporated into a sign. This small addition to the sign also served, more importantly, as an adverisement for the sign maker. The last name (and possibly first and middle initials) was either centered at the bottom or inserted in the lower right hand corner of horizontal signs while on vertical signs, the name was usually centered at the bottom.

The sign artist's name appeared so small relative to other elements of the sign that it was essentially invisible unless closely scrutinized. The name was written either in a simple block, Roman or in the handwritten script of the interpretive period.



V. TYPICAL SIGN TYPES

Sign designers of the 19th Century were quite resourceful in their ability to utilize building surface geometry for advertising. The exterior configuration of a structure often determined the types of signs that were used.

Many of Old Sacramento's buildings dating from the 1849 to mid 1850's period, were canopy or balconyless structures. Cantilevered balconies, which projected only a short distance away from a building's face, were conversely, quite common. It was only by the late 1850's or early 1860's that the large canopy and balcony structures became standard in Sacramento. Then, as well as today, these architectural details, or their absence, dictated the principal advertising techniques which could be utilized on exterior facades.

Today, in order to insure public safety, certain limitations have been placed on commercial sign installations. These include:

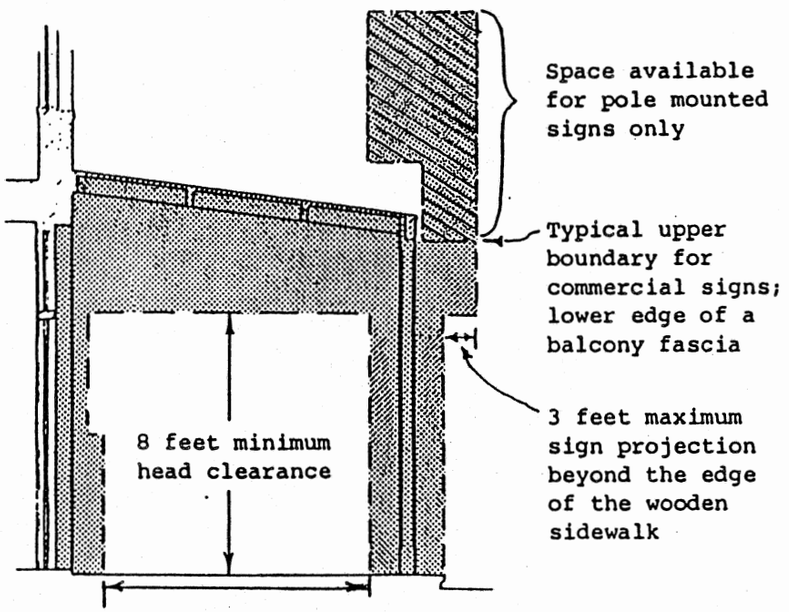
(1) A continuous 10 foot wide pedestrian way, free of signs and other obstructions, must be maintained on the street facade sidewalk of all historic structures within the District.

(2) All signs suspended over pedestrian paths must be installed a minimum of 8 feet above adjacent walkway surfaces.

(3) No part of a sign will be permitted to project into a street right-of-way a distance greater than three feet.

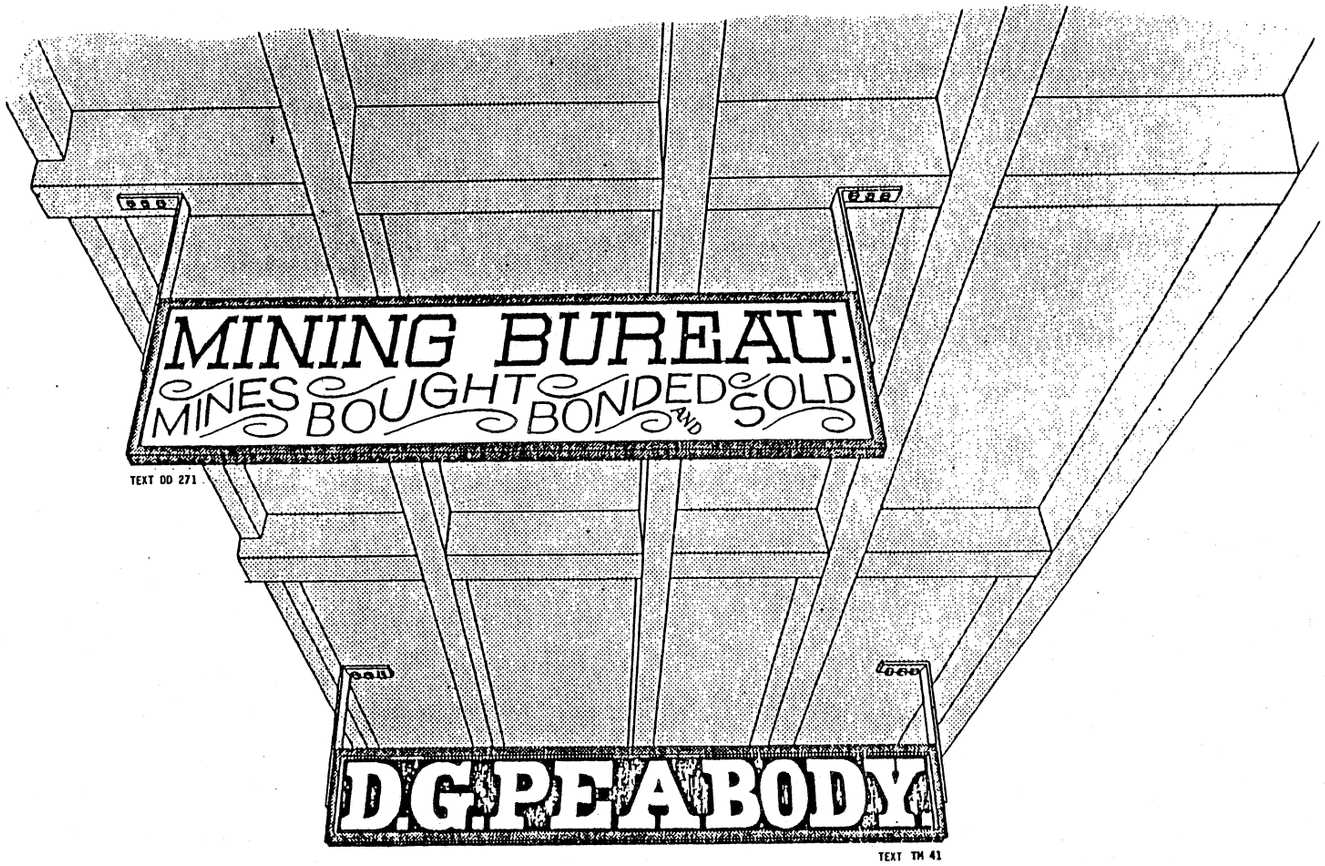
Typical Street Facade Cross-section

Shaded area indicates space available for commercial signs.


Space available for pole mounted signs only
Typical upper boundary for commercial signs; lower edge of a balcony fascia
3 feet maximum sign projection beyond the edge of the wooden sidewalk
8 feet minimum head clearance
10 feet minimum width of pedestrian walkway

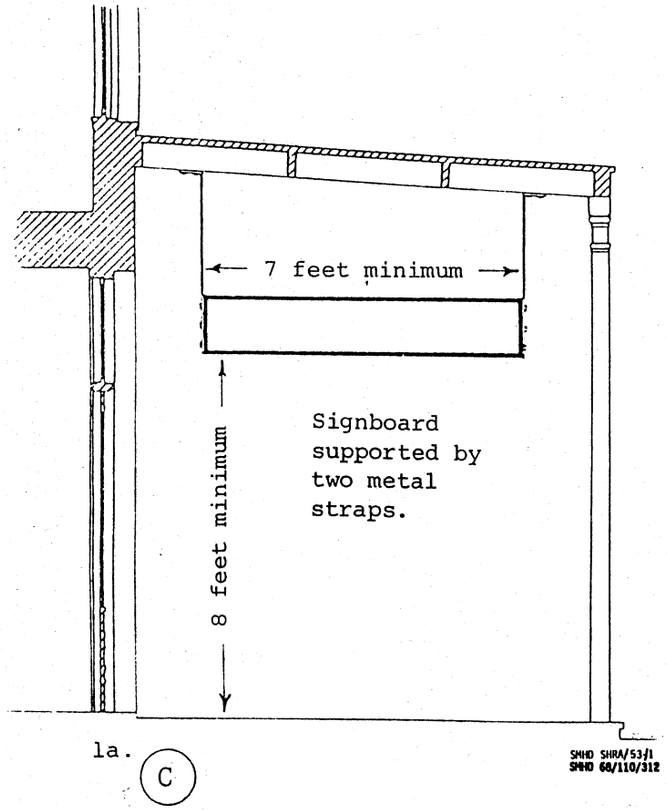
A. STREET FACADE SIGNS

All modern commercial exterior signs shall be of a basic design appropriate for the Old Sacramento Historic District. Commercial sign types permitted on the street facade of buildings, are presented on the following pages.

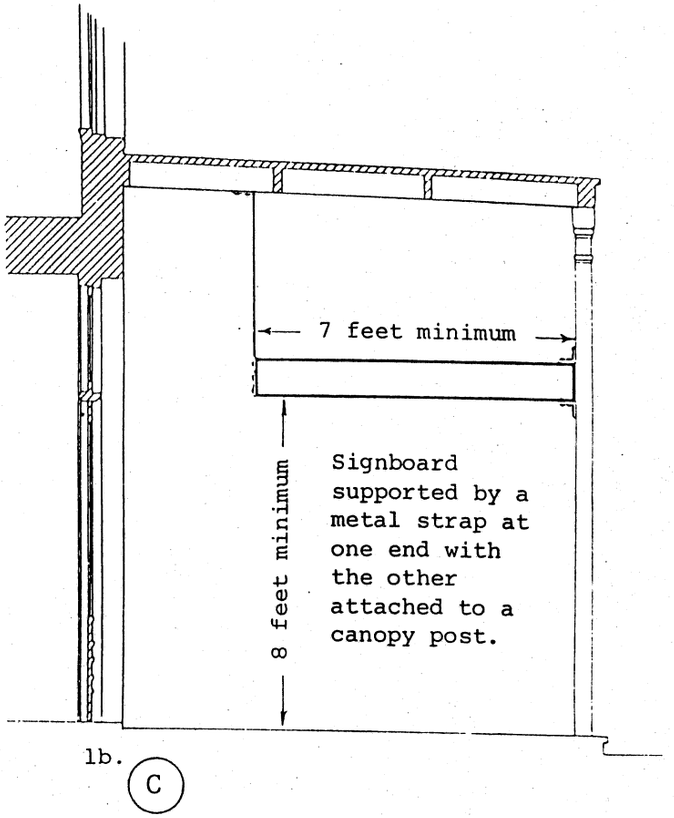


1. HORIZONTAL, DOUBLE-FACED, FRAMED, WOODEN SIGNBOARD, MOUNTED PERPENDICULAR TO THE BUILDING FACE, SUPPORTED AT TWO OR MORE POINTS AND INSTALLED BELOW THE CANOPY OR BALCONY STRUCTURE. (C)

INSTALLATION VARIATIONS (1a-1e).

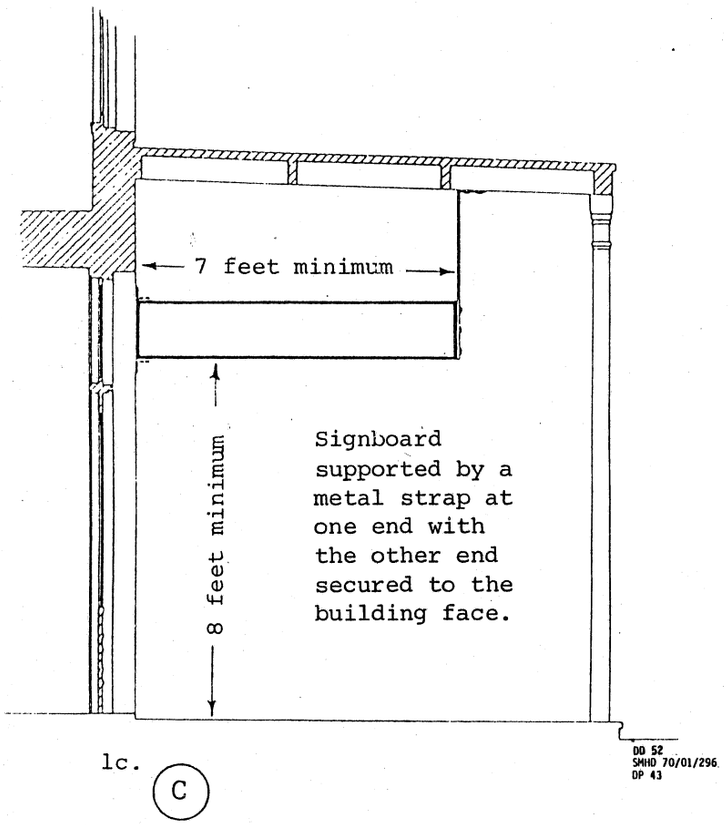


1a. (C)



1b. (C)

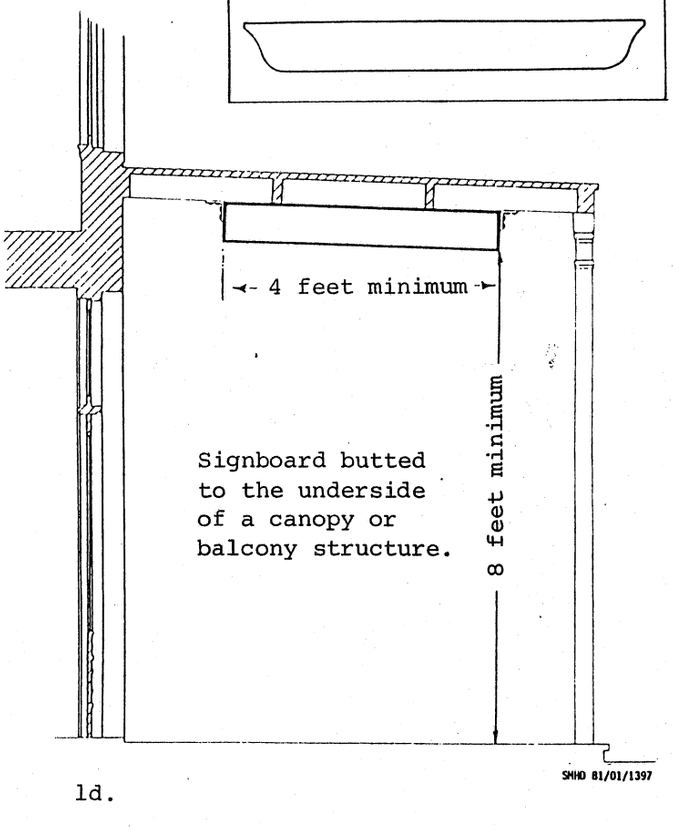
Most signs must be a minimum of seven feet long to be in proper scale with the historic buildings. The exceptions are signs attached flush beneath a building's canopy, as in example "d". These may be a minimum of four feet in length. Sign example "e", which spans the sidewalk, must be at least ten feet long. All signs must be installed a minimum of eight feet above the sidewalk.


7 feet minimum
8 feet minimum
Signboard supported by a metal strap at one end with the other end secured to the building face.
DD 52
SMHD 70/01/296
DP 43

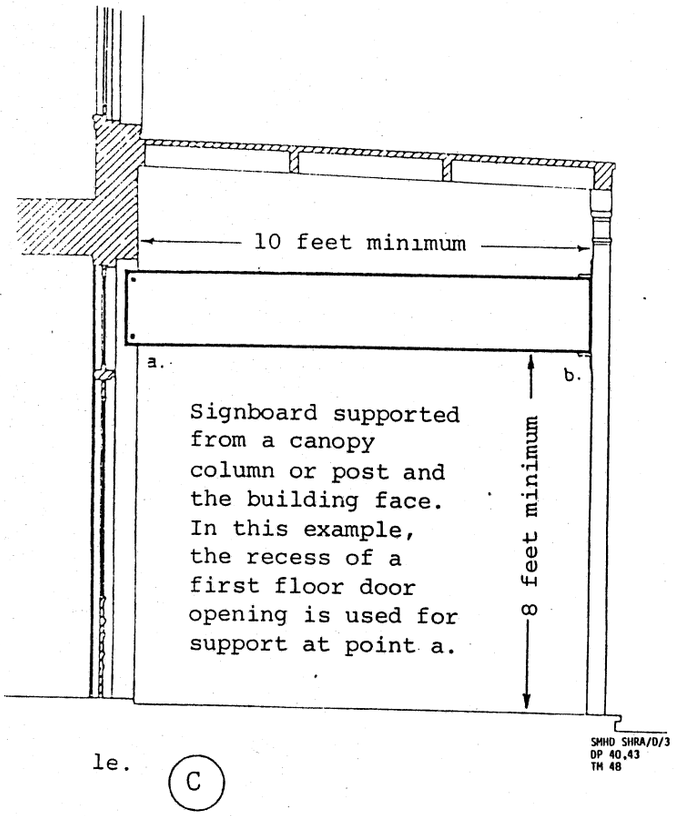
1c.

C

A common format for type 1d was an unframed inverted sign cap. See page 33 for other acceptable shapes.



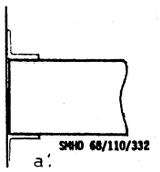
1d.


10 feet minimum
a.
b.
Signboard supported from a canopy column or post and the building face. In this example, the recess of a first floor door opening is used for support at point a.
8 feet minimum
SMHD SHRA/D/3
DP 40,43
TM 48

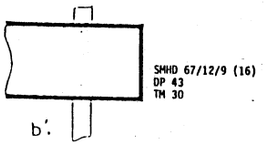
1e. (C)

Alternate attachment methods for sign installation 1e. (a′ and b′).

Sign end attached to the face of a building.



Sign attached to the side of a post.

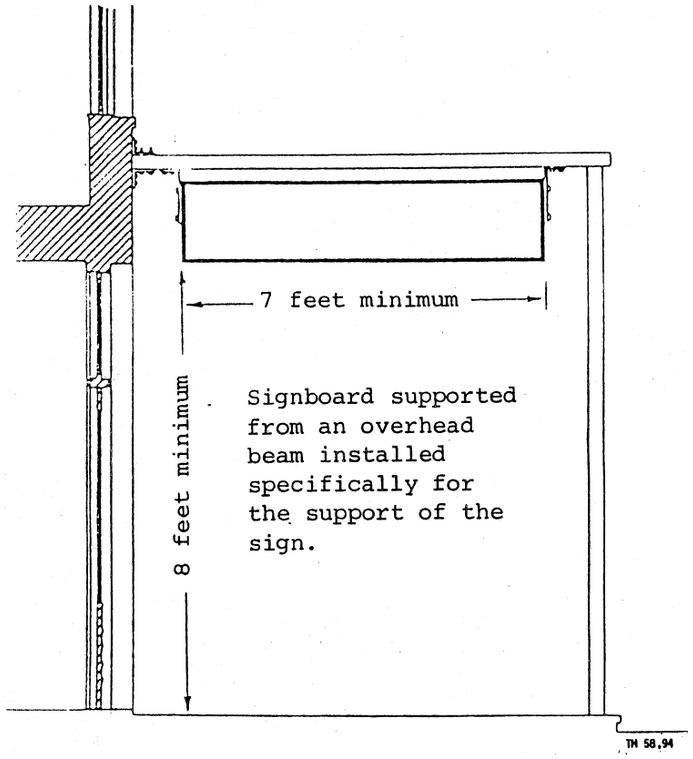


Note:

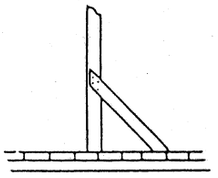
Sign word layout on the reverse side of installation b′ would be shortened.

2. HORIZONTAL, DOUBLE-FACED, FRAMED, WOODEN SIGN, MOUNTED PERPENDICULAR TO THE BUILDING FACE, SUSPENDED FROM AN OVERHEAD BEAM. The beam is supported by the building face and a free-standing post mounted at the edge of the sidewalk.* These signs must be a minimum of seven feet long.

R-2


7 feet minimum
8 feet minimum
Signboard supported from an overhead beam installed specifically for the support of the sign.
TM 58,94

A wooden brace was occasionally used with free-standing posts.



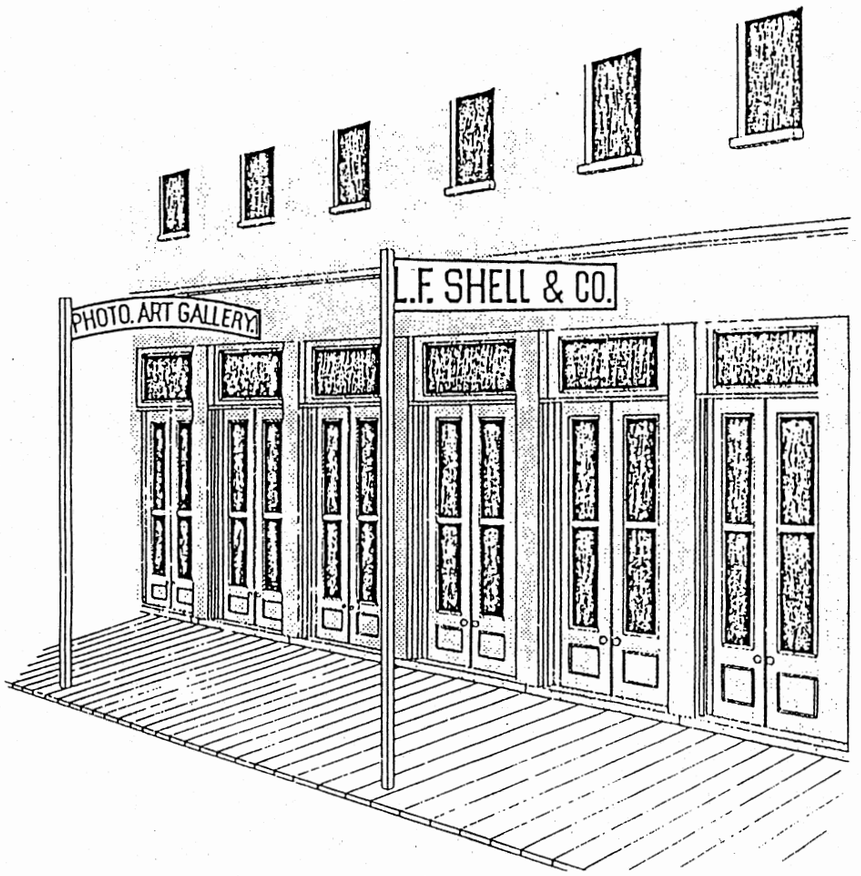
End view

TM 35,94,76

The free-standing post can be plain or chamfered, and the post and beam may be left unpainted. Signs must be installed a minimum of eight feet above the sidewalk. Occasionally, the free-standing post was braced near the base.

* It should be noted that all free-standing posts, with or without an auxillary brace, must be securely anchored below the wooden sidewalk.

(C) 3. HORIZONTAL, DOUBLE-FACED, FRAMED, WOODEN SIGNBOARD MOUNTED PERPENDICULAR TO A BUILDING'S FACE, SUPPORTED BY A FREE-STANDING,* SQUARE POST AT ONE END AND THE BUILDING FACE AT THE OTHER. The rectangular (non-arched) versions of this type of sign were by far the most common. Street facade signs must be a minimum of ten feet long. Posts can be plain or chamfered and may be left unpainted. On occasion, the free-standing post was braced near the base. See Sign Type 2.



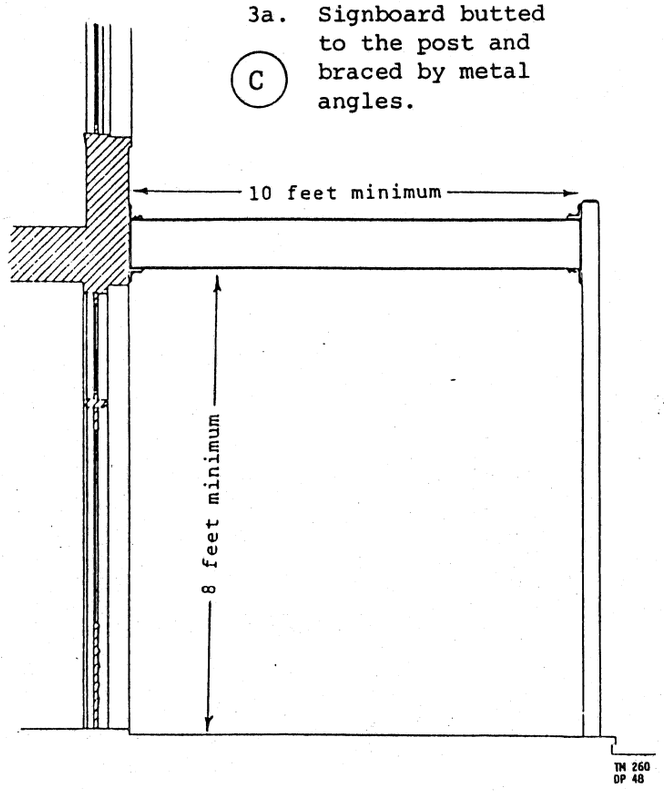
*It should be noted that all free-standing posts, with or without an auxiliary brace, must be securely anchored below the wooden sidewalk.

VARIATIONS:

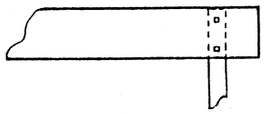
Details of appropriate joints between posts and signboard 3a-3d. Signs must be installed a minimum of eight feet above the sidewalk. Signs may extend beyond support posts.

3a. Signboard butted to the post and braced by metal angles.

(C)



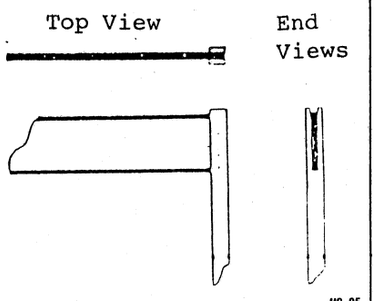
3b. Signboard attached to the side of the free-standing post.



Note: Sign text on the reverse side of this installation is shortened.

GF 19
TM 94

3c. Support post slotted to receive the signboard.

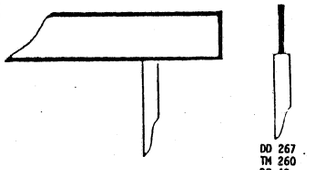


MB 85
TM 41
RR 50

3d. Signboard attached to the top of the square support post.

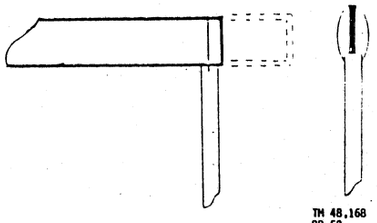
3d(1) No visible means of additional support.

(C)



DD 267
TM 260
DP 48

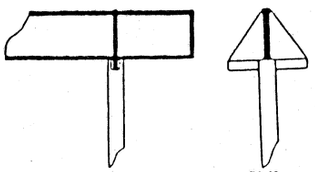
3d(2) Signboard secured by a loop of heavy wire.



TM 48,168
DD 52

3d(3) Signboard secured by a metal strap in conjunction with a short cross member installed at the top of the post.

(R)

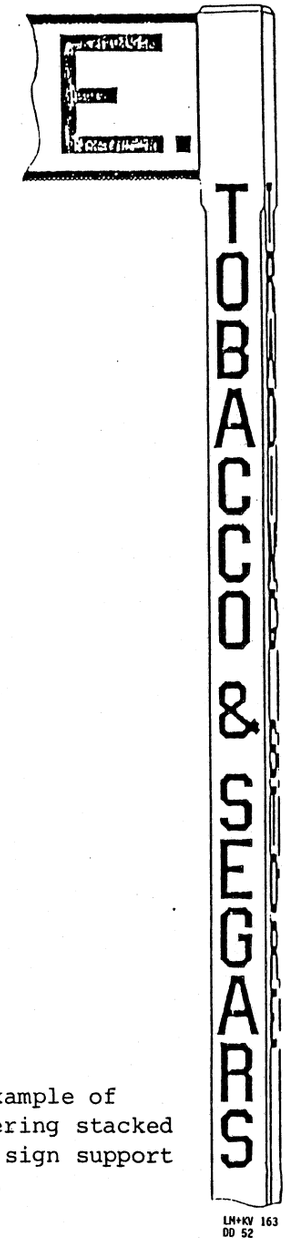


TM 43
DD 271

(R-1) e. Installed in a "V"-shape. Two single-sided signs.

f. A SIGN MAY BE PAINTED ON THE SQUARE SUPPORT POST. Words or lettering were arranged as a single stacked column, or presented in a regular "casual" or "formal" word pattern, illustrated on page 57,66 and 68. This was not a common sign format for regular canopy or balcony posts, and will be permitted today only on free-standing sign posts.

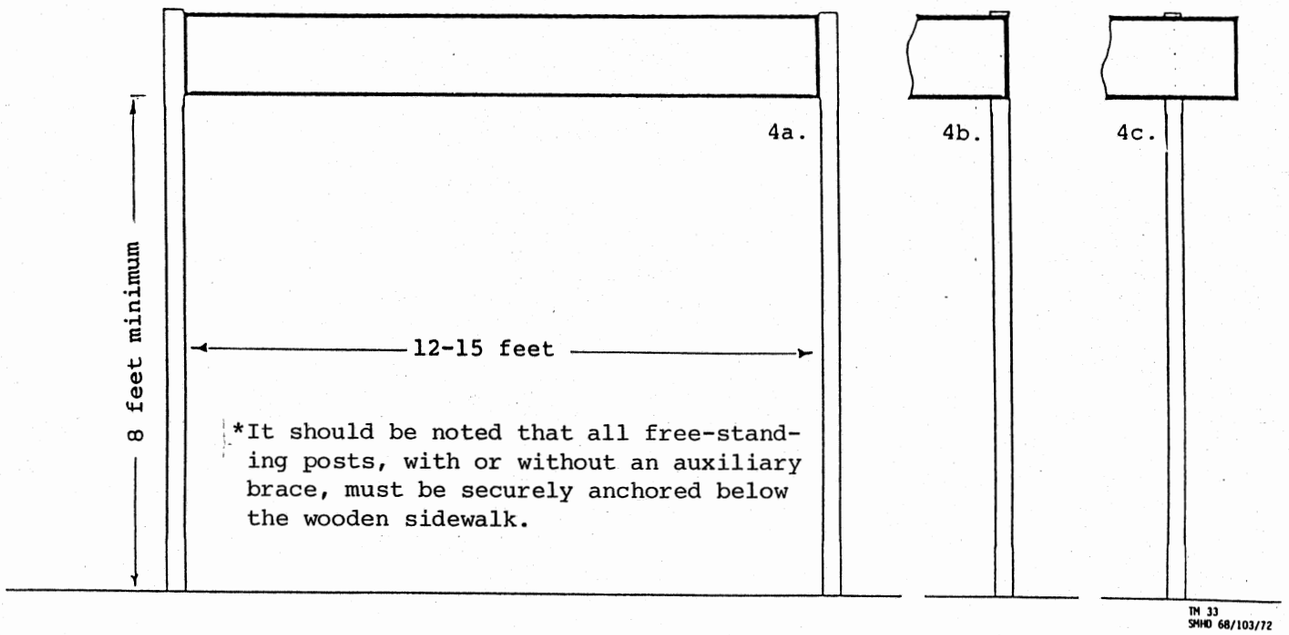
(R)



An example of lettering stacked on a sign support post.

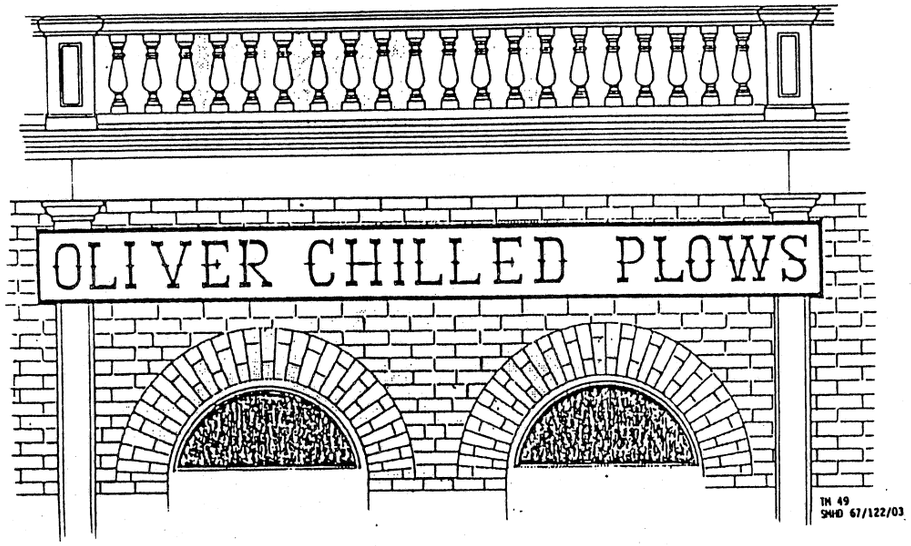
(R-7) 4. HORIZONTAL, SINGLE OR DOUBLE-FACED, FRAMED WOODEN SIGN, MOUNTED BETWEEN OR EXTENDING JUST BEYOND TWO FREE-STANDING, SQUARE POSTS.* This was not a common sign type historically and probably has little application except in the waterfront area of the Historic District. Post may be plain or chamfered and painted or unpainted. On occasion, a free-standing post was braced at its base. See page 130. These signs should be constructed between twelve and fifteen feet in length and must be installed a minimum of eight feet above the sidewalk.

VARIATIONS in mounting signboard to posts 4a-4c.


4a.
4b.
4c.
8 feet minimum
12-15 feet
*It should be noted that all free-standing posts, with or without an auxiliary brace, must be securely anchored below the wooden sidewalk.
TM 33
SMHD 68/103/72

5. SINGLE-SIDED, HORIZONTAL, WOODEN SIGN, MOUNTED PARALLEL TO A BUILDING FACE, BELOW A CANOPY OR BALCONY FASCIA, SPANNING TWO COLUMNS OR POSTS, OR EXTENDING JUST BEYOND. A sign of this type is a minimum of one canopy or balcony bay in length.

(C)



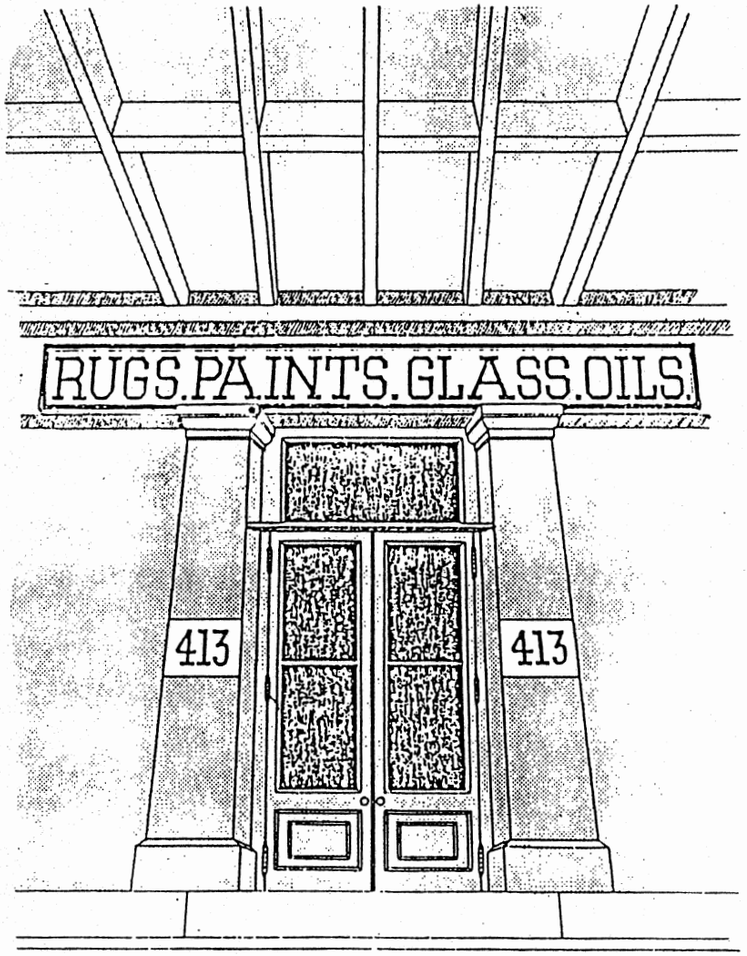
5a. CANVAS COVERED SKELETON FRAME SIGN ATTACHED TO A CANOPY OR BALCONY STRUCTURE. This sign is similar in appearance to #5, except that it usually lacks a frame or border. In order to construct this sign, it is necessary to install an additional horizontal wood member below the fascia, spanning between canopy or balcony posts. The canvas sign is then stretched between the wooden posts, the fascia and the additional horizontal wood member. See skeleton frame construction on page 194 for similar construction details. Signs commonly were 20 feet long. This is an 1850's era sign type suitable for buildings with square posts.

(not illustrated)
SMHD 82/110/01

6. SINGLE-SIDED, HORIZONTAL SIGNBOARD, SURFACE-MOUNTED ABOVE FIRST FLOOR WINDOWS OR DOORS AND BELOW THE CANOPY OR BALCONY STRUCTURE (IF PRESENT). These signs must be at least five feet in length. Most historical signs, however, were much longer than this dimension.

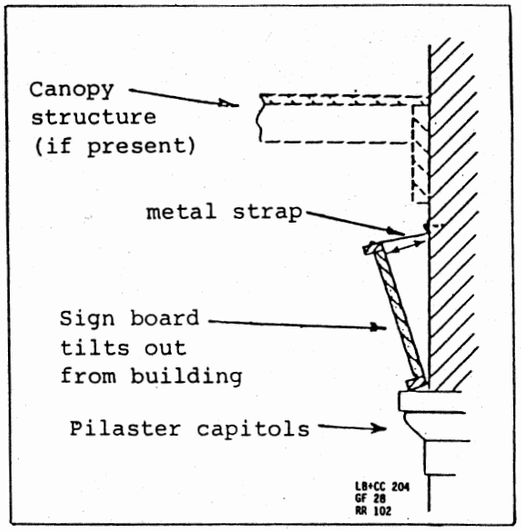
VARIATIONS:

(C) 6a. CONVENTIONALLY FRAMED SIGN. The signboard's upper edge was often tilted out slightly towards the street and secured by metal straps.



TM 35,49,256
DP 51
LB+CC 106
GF 3,4,12(8),27,28

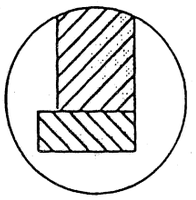
Cross-section through tilted sign variation



(C) 6b. FRAMELESS SIGN VARIANT.* This sign was commonly mounted flat against a building face or, less often, spanned two canopy columns as in sign type No. 5. It was rarely mounted perpendicular to a building face or suspended. Curved end details with a wide variety of shapes were used. Note examples illustrated. In a more reduced scale, this type of sign could be mounted flat below a window (see page 164 and 165). The outer edge of the signboard was often slightly rounded. See cross-section. Occasionally, a half-round molding was attached to the face of the sign just within and paralleling the outer edge of the sign.

In rarer instances, a frame could be applied to the "frameless" sign if the end profiles contained shallow curves.

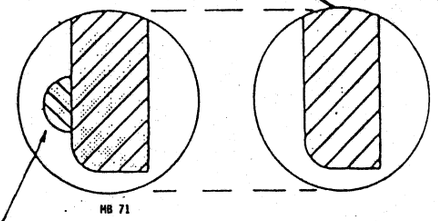
Section through a conventionally framed single-sided sign.



GF 15,27,28,31
TN 48
RR 82
LB+CC 106
MB 71

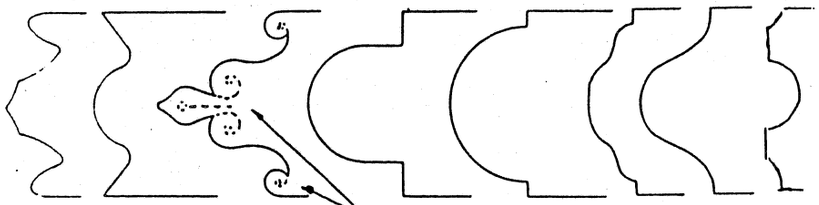
Sign cross-section

Enlargement of signboard edge



Occasionally a half-round molding was attached on the face of a sign closely paralleling the outer edge of the signboard. The end profile of these signs must have gentle curves.

Examples of possible variations in frameless signboard end designs.



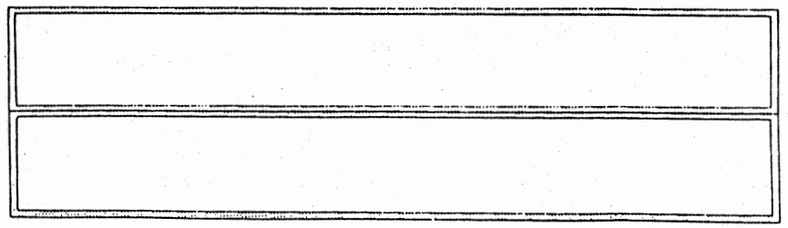
Painted extensions of end profile

*Predominately an 1850's sign; used as a common steamboat pilot house sign to a much later date.

7. TWO LARGE, HORIZONTAL SIGNBOARDS WERE SOMETIMES COMBINED. The following sign variants may be used in the same situation as those shown under: sign types 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, or 6.

VARIATIONS:

7a. Two framed signboards may be butted together one above the other. Signboards may be of equal length and width (as shown) or of differing dimensions.



GF 19

Note: The lower edge of all suspended sign installations, must be a minimum of 8 feet above the sidewalk.

7b. Two framed signboards may be combined by suspending one below the other via metal straps.

TM 41

7c. An unframed signboard may cap a conventionally framed sign. Several cap shapes are possible. (Note that the unframed upper signboard shape shown in the example, was used alone only in an inverted form, directly attached to the underside of a wooden canopy structure, as in sign type 1d).

Cross-section

Frame-less cap

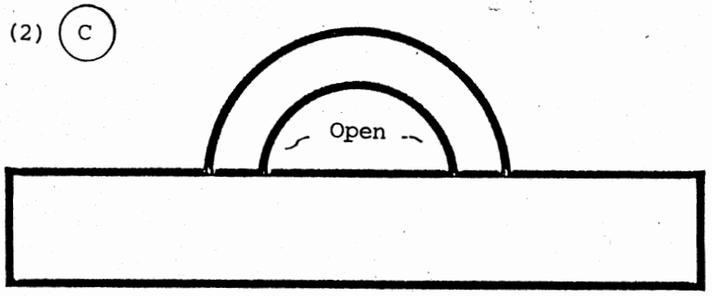
Framed sign

7d. An arched upper panel may be added to a conventional horizontal signboard. Several variations are possible. See format examples (1) -(6). Signs of this type must be a minimum of seven feet long on the street facade, but no greater than twelve feet long. (See sign type 8 for limitations on the use of the arched signboard alone).

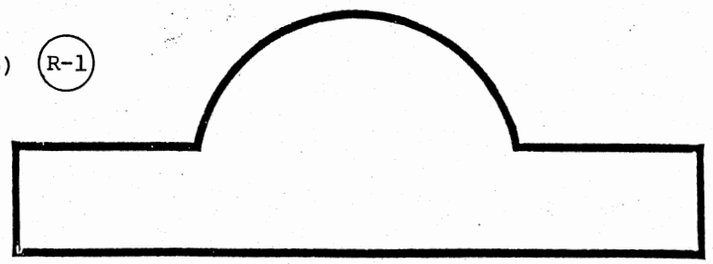
(1) (C)

In some instances, this type of sign was constructed as a single unit with no framing breaks between upper and lower elements as in examples (3) and (5).

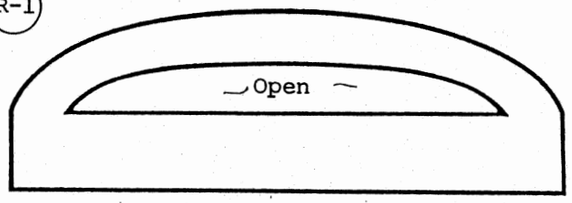
(2) C



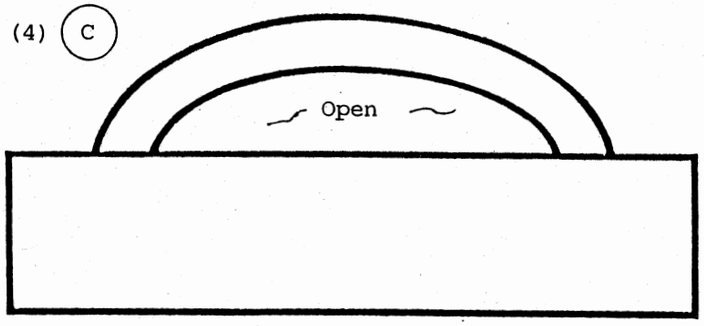
(5) R-1



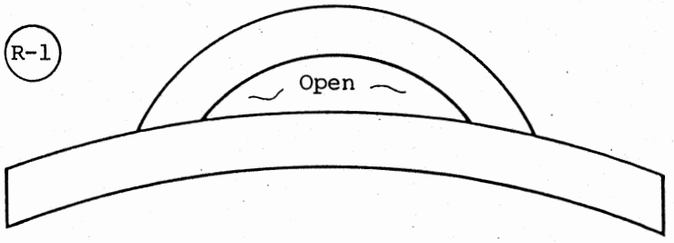
(3) R-1



(4) C



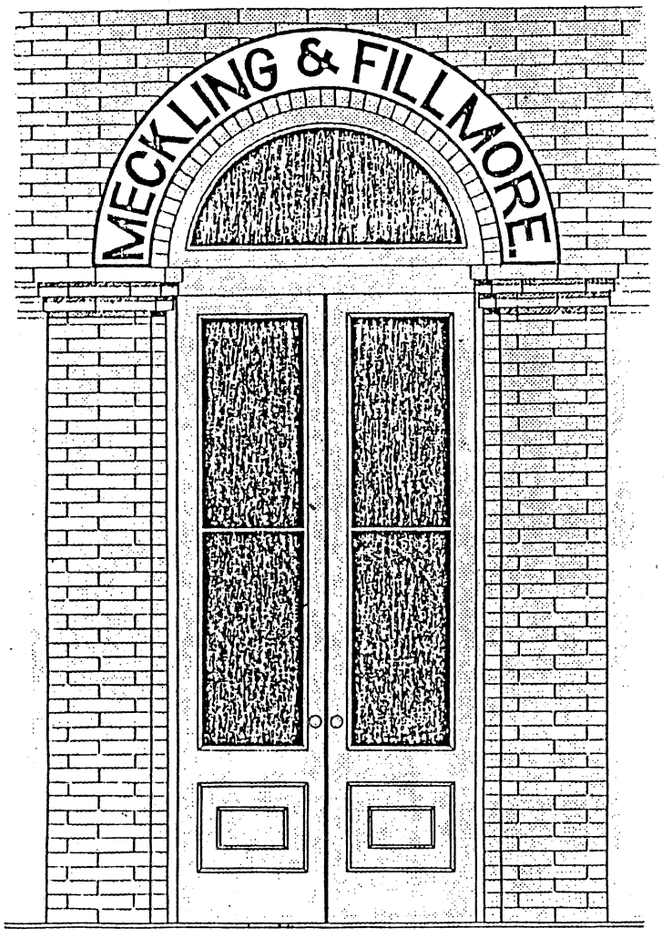
(6) R-1



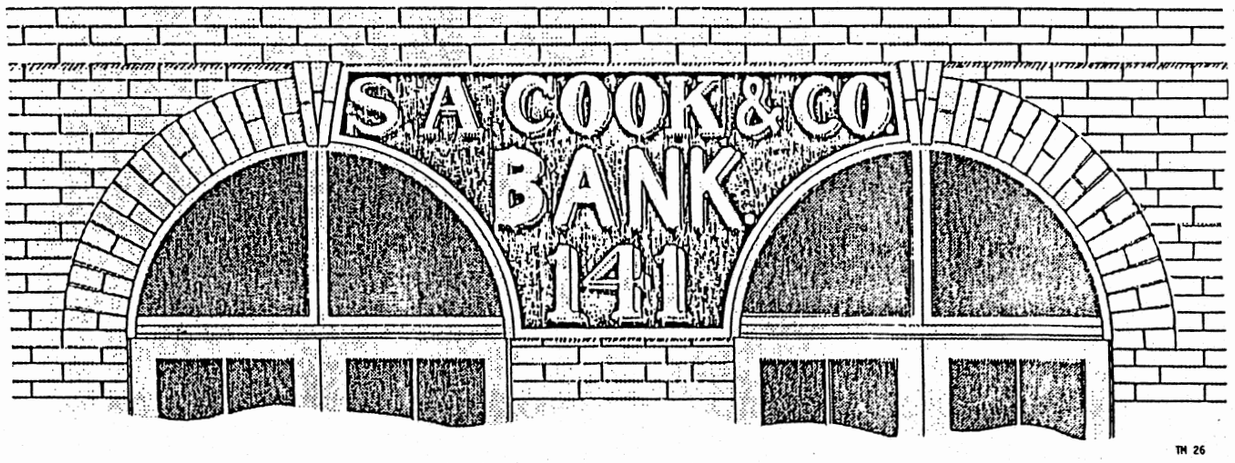
DD 232,271,281,283
DP 48,92

8. FRAMED, WOODEN SIGN MOUNTED ABOVE AND FOLLOWING THE CURVE OF AN ARCHED OPENING. This sign type is only to be used above an architectural arch. Adjacent arches on the same building were also utilized for advertising of this type.

(C)

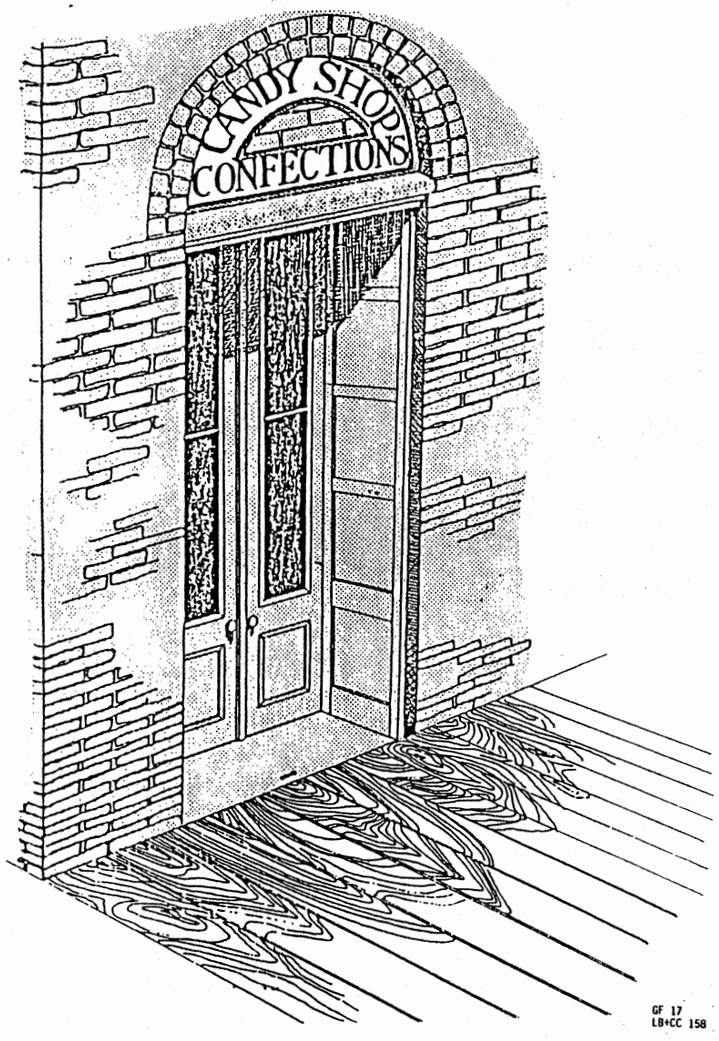


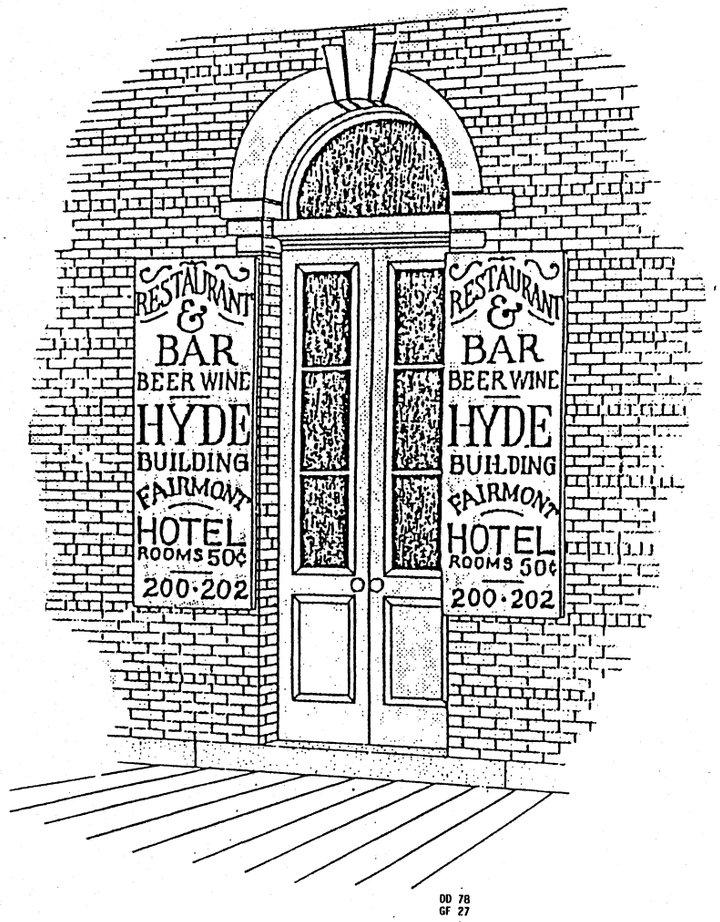
(R-3) 9. FRAMELESS WOODEN SIGN MOUNTED FLAT AGAINST A WALL BETWEEN TWO ADJACENT ARCHES. This sign shape was relatively rare, being used only between two arched openings.



10. FRAMED WOODEN SIGN MOUNTED WITHIN THE RECESS OF A SOLID BRICK OR PLASTER ARCH. This type of sign can be used only within the recessed area of a solid arch of constant radius. Advertising signs on adjacent arches of the same structure were quite common.

(C)

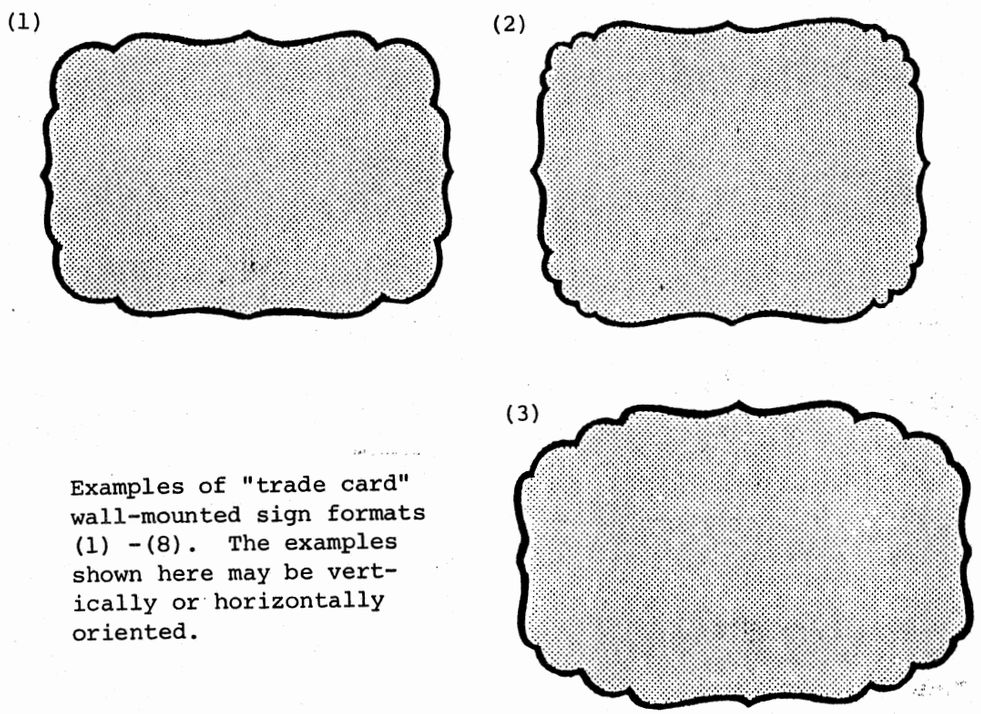




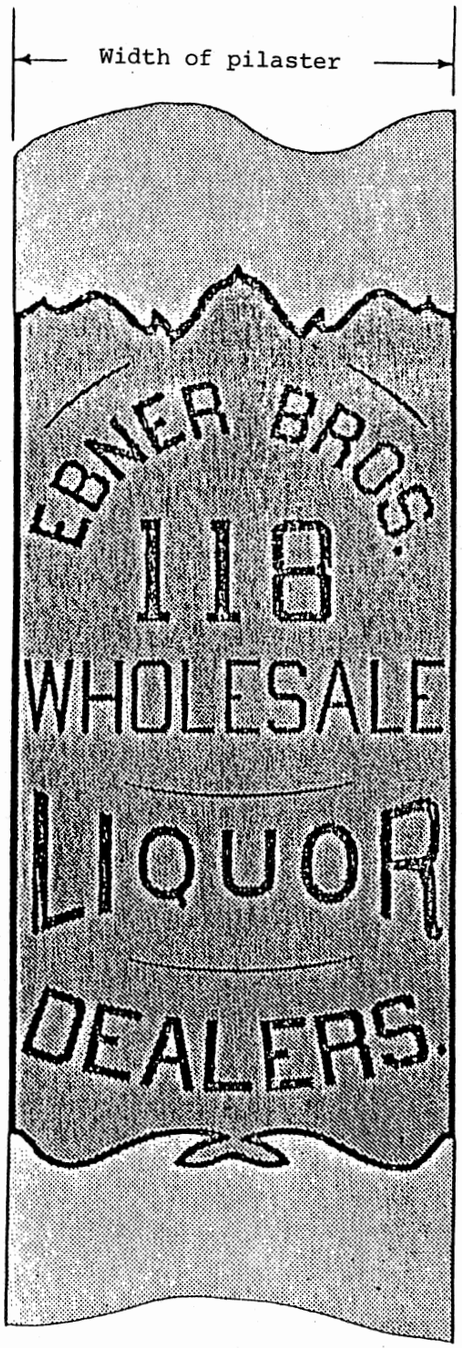
(C) 11. WOODEN SIGNBOARD MOUNTED FLAT BELOW DOOR-FRAME HEIGHT ON THE SURFACE OF THE WALL OR PILASTER. This type of sign was periodically located in the recesses of doorways. The shape and overall design for signs of this type are known to have varied greatly. Rectangular "tombstone" formats were very common. Most signs were rectangular with flat bottoms; either flat top; flat top with 45^0 corners; or a top contour composed of a half-circle, arc, or compound "S" curve. Some shield forms were used. See SIGNBOARD SHAPES on page 29.

VARIATIONS:

11a. Some wall-mounted signs were rendered in business or trade card format popular during the interpretive period.* These signs were generally frameless and had borders composed of "french curve" combinations - "S"s or convex or concave curved edges. If one of these signs was mounted on a pilaster, the two vertical edges of the sign were made straight and extended to the edge of the pilaster. See example to the right.



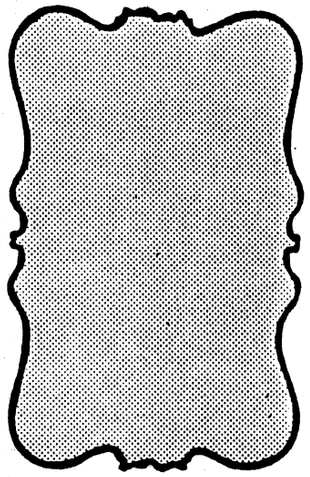
Examples of "trade card" wall-mounted sign formats (1) -(8). The examples shown here may be vertically or horizontally oriented.



SHND 73/230/09

* Occasionally, trade card shapes were also used for signs suspended over the sidewalks.

(4)

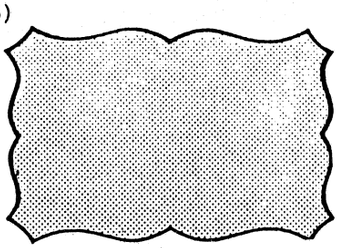


11b. Historically, many wall-mounted signs covered the entire width of pilasters.

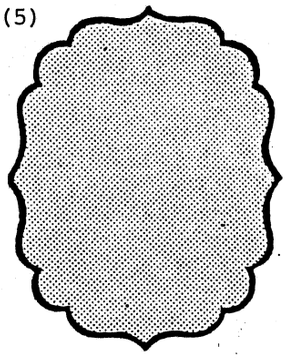
11c. Wall-mounted signs may be placed on the sides of entranceways.

11d. Signs with shallow and simple curves or straight edges could be framed. If frameless, the sign had a painted border with a pin stripe usually on or just inside the edge of the signboard. Framed signs with glass faces were rare except those used in conjunction with photographic studios. See PRODUCT SYMBOLS AND DISPLAYS on page 21.

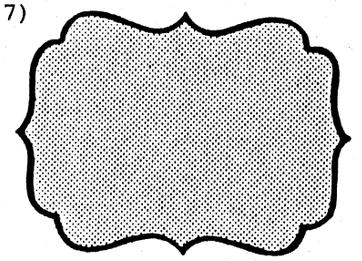
(6)



(5)

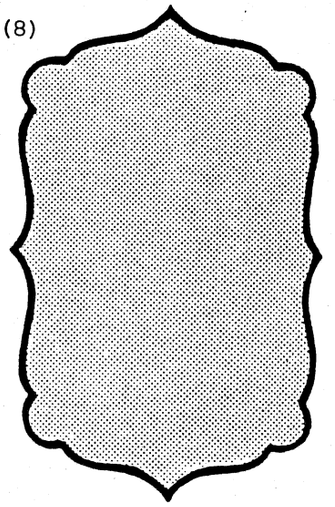


(7)



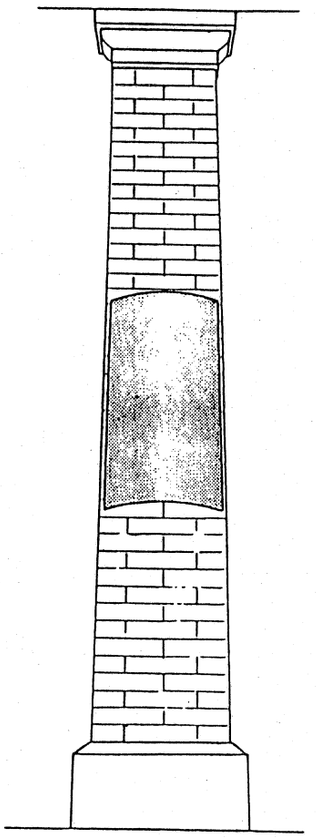
LB+CC 204
GF 17,20
DP 41
RR 154
CH (PICTORIAL) 186

(8)

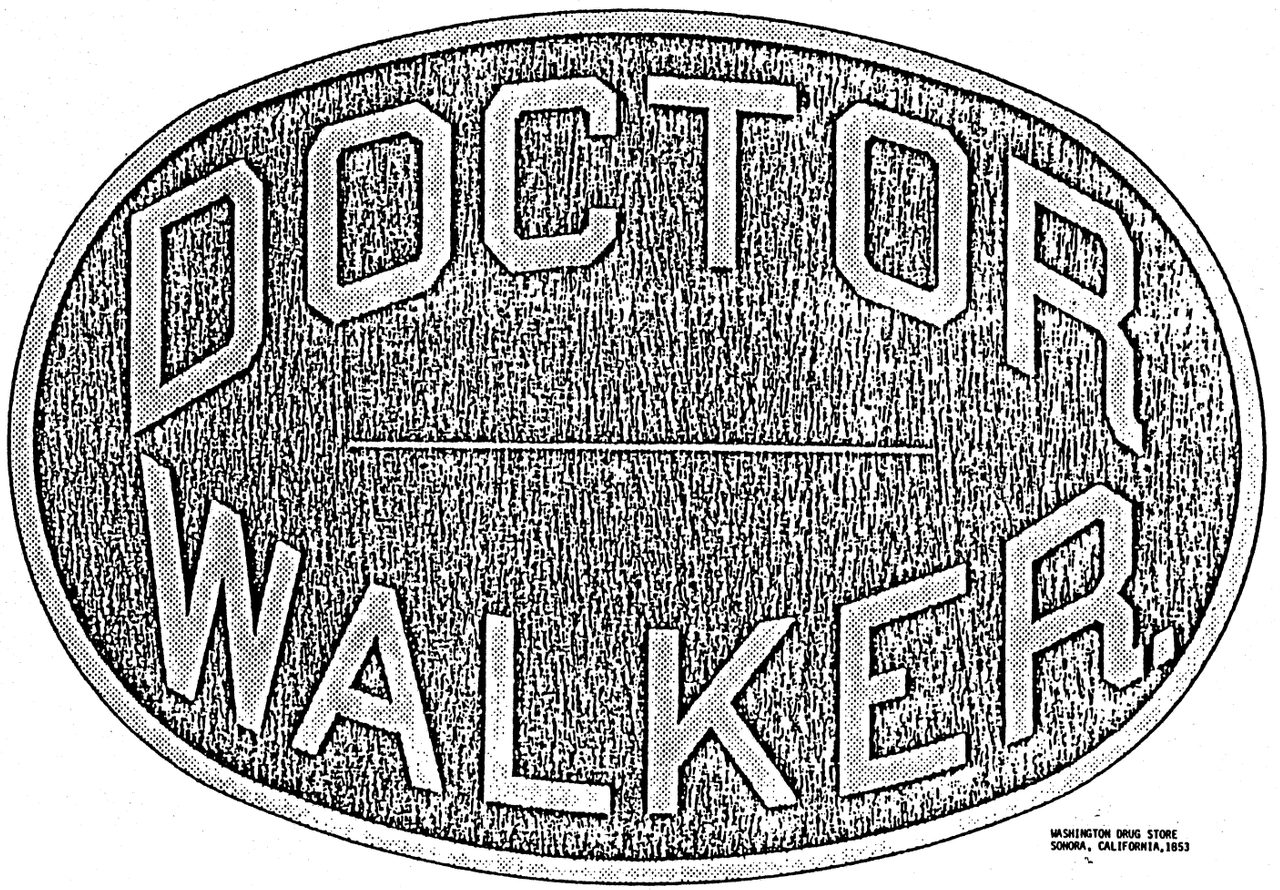


12. CURVED METAL SIGN MOUNTED AT EYE LEVEL ON A PILASTER OR WALL SURFACE. This sign was constructed of sheet metal bent around a wooden frame. In some instances, the face of the sign was a sheet of polished brass with the design etched, rolled, or stamped on its surface and its recessed areas painted black. Their shape could be similar to other wall-mounted signs, including the shield and oval formats. See page 212 for a further explanation of curved metal sign construction.

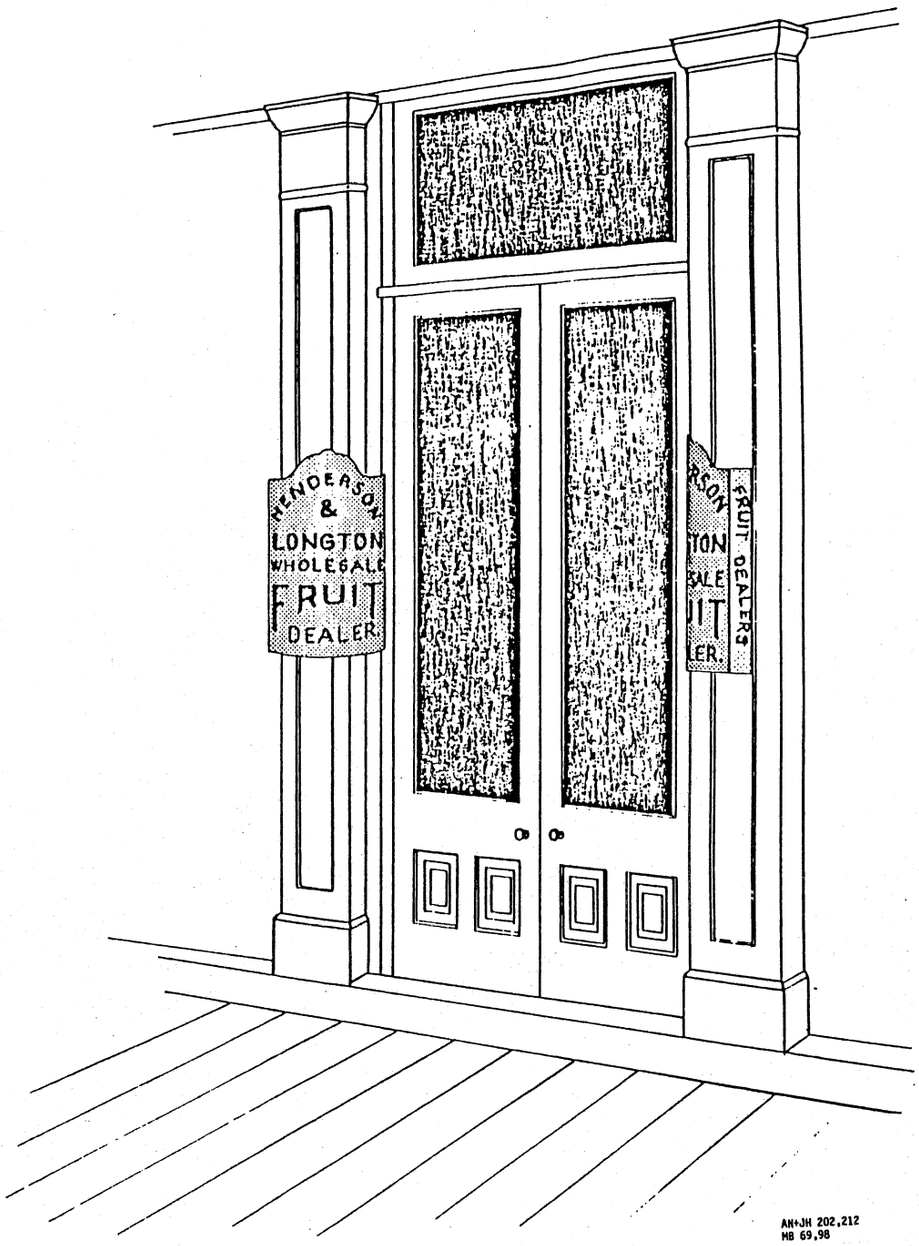
AN+JH 148,201,202
LB+CC 101
MB 98



An example of a brass, oval-shaped, curved metal sign.



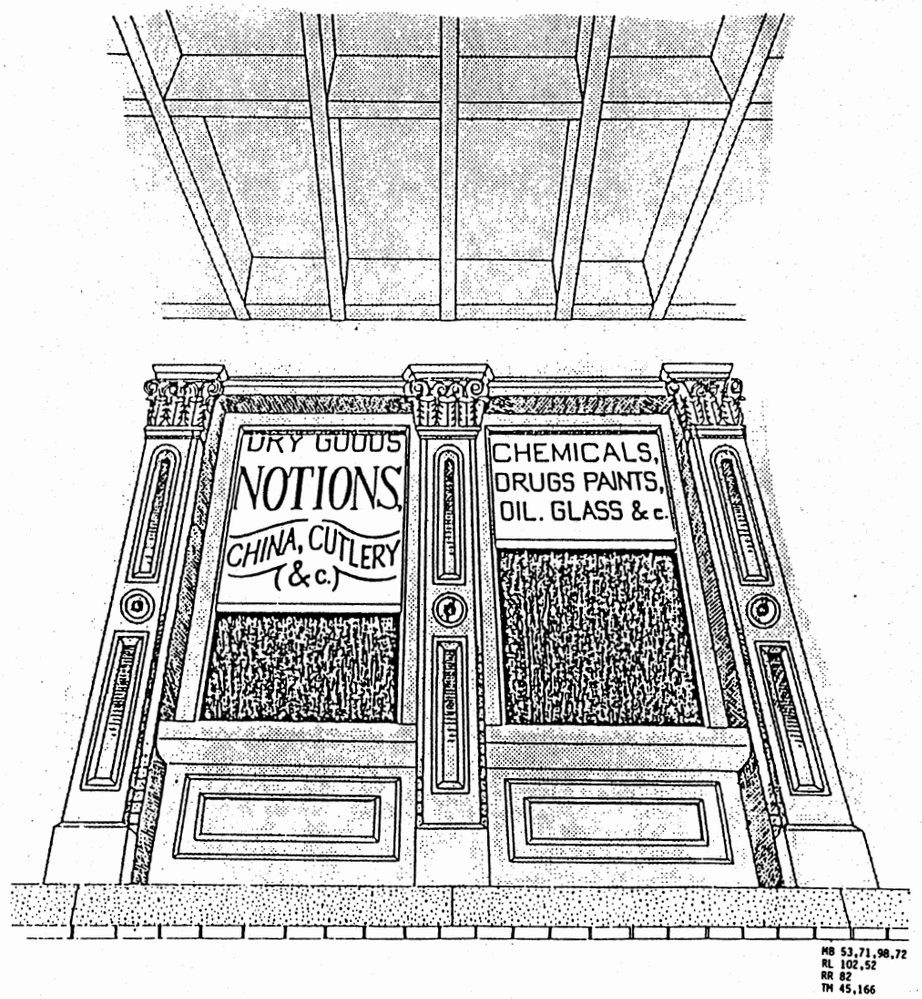
Often the curved metal sign was used on corners of buildings or paired and angled into an entranceway. The wooden framework could also be used for advertising as shown by the example.



AN+JH 202,212
MB 69,98

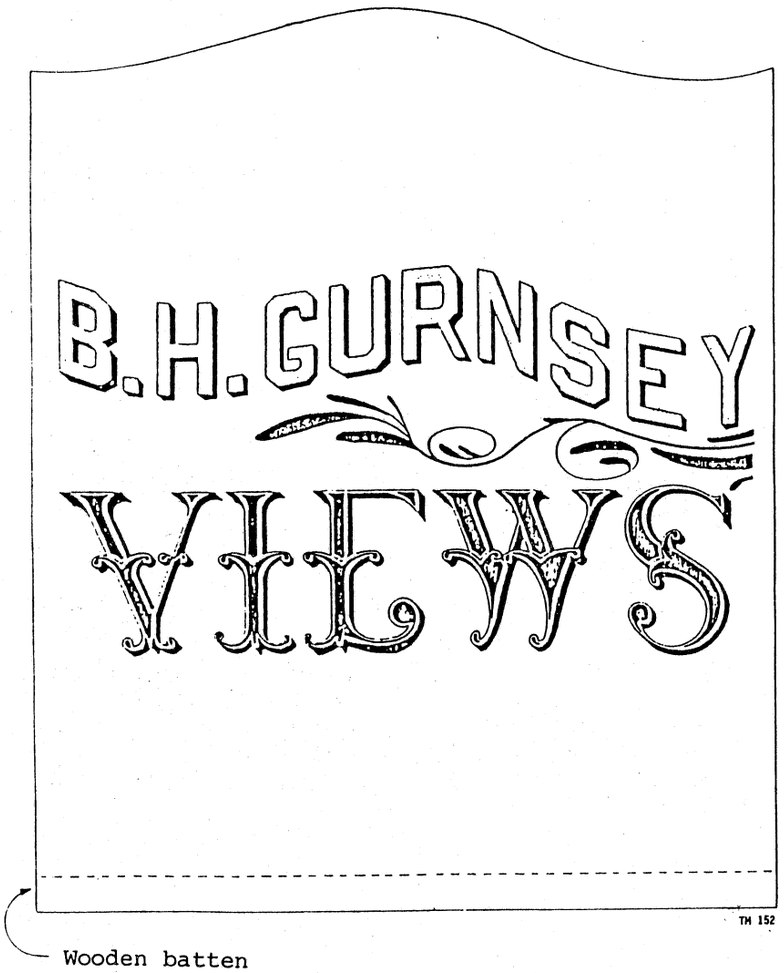
13. SIGN PAINTED ON A CURTAIN OR SHADE BEHIND A WINDOW. The shade must be fabricated from cloth and not plastic.

Greater space was generally left around the words of curtain signs than other sign formats.



MB 53,71,98,72
RL 102,52
RR 82
TM 45,166

Historically, more ornate letter styles could be utilized with this type of sign. See sections dealing with typefaces on pages 43,45 and 71 in ELEMENTS OF 19TH CENTURY SIGNS.

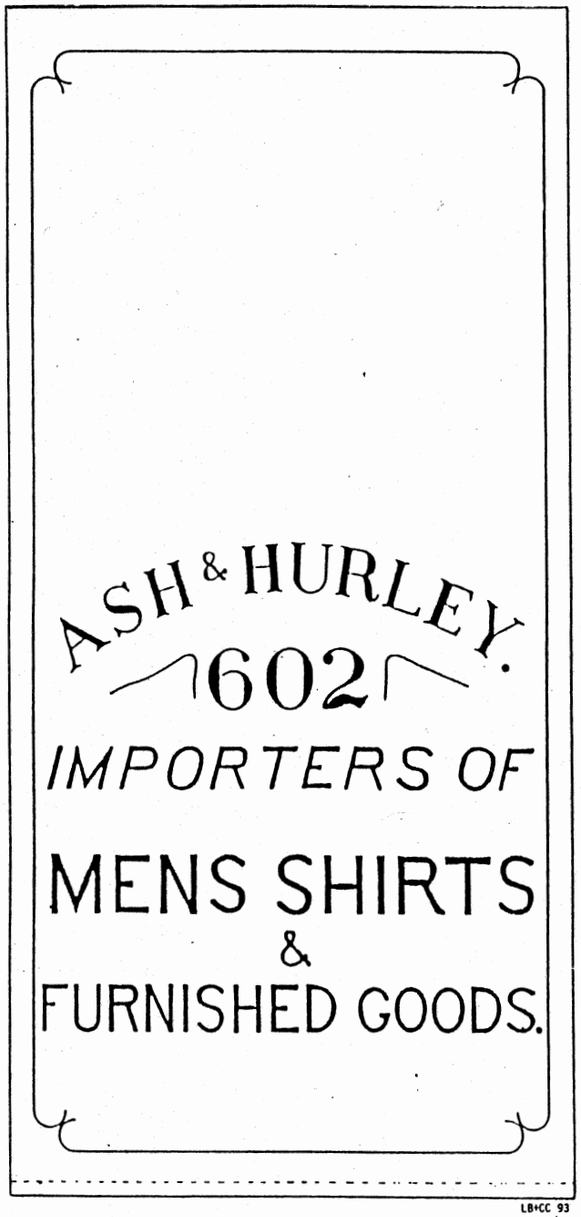


Note:

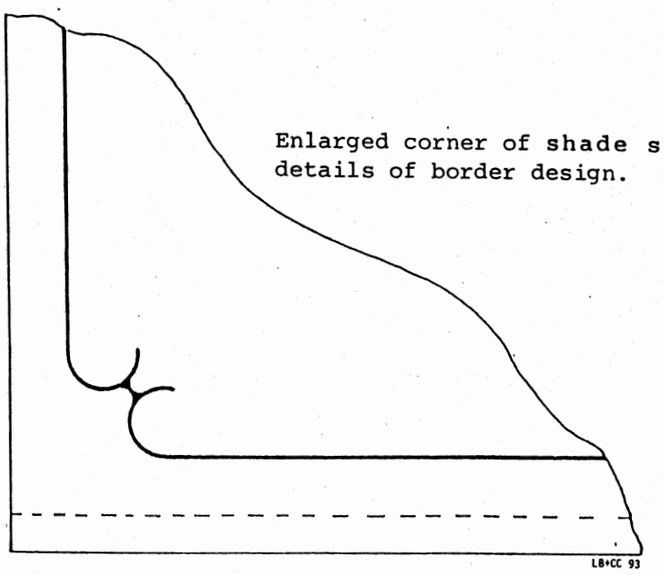
Most sign designers carried the concept of visual variety a step further than just the emphasis on creating a range in typefaces used on a single sign. In cases where two identical sign types were used side by side, such as two shade signs, at least one (usually more) element of sign design was altered so that each sign was different and distinctive. This was usually achieved by totally changing the text and word layouts of the two signs.

Some sign designers attempted to maintain a visual tie between paired signs by using a similar word pattern, visual balance and typestyle, line for line. Differentiation was accomplished through the selection of different words for each sign. An example of two similar but different texts are as follows: "A. ROMAN & CO., PUBLISHERS & BOOK SELLERS."; "A. ROMAN & CO., IMPORTERS & STATIONERS." On both signs the company name was arched over two horizontal product and service word bands. Visually, from a distance, the signs look identical. However, only the proprietary information is the same.

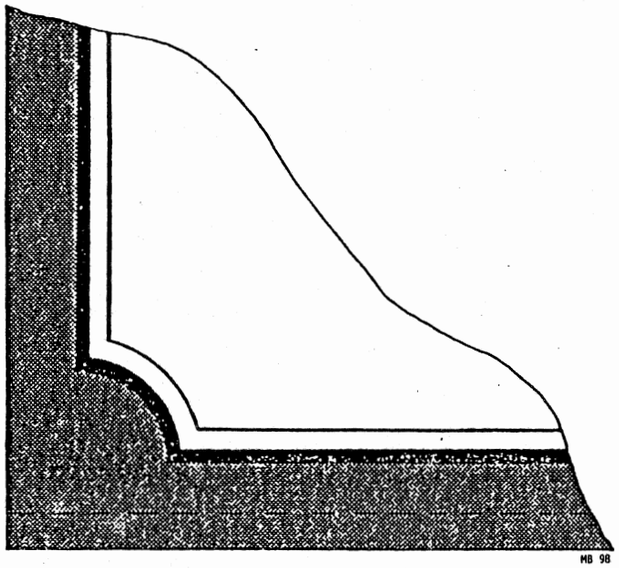
The concept of avoiding exact duplication holds true for all hand painted, paired signs. Machine manufactured signs, such as curved metal brass signs with embossed faces, usually did not follow this principle.



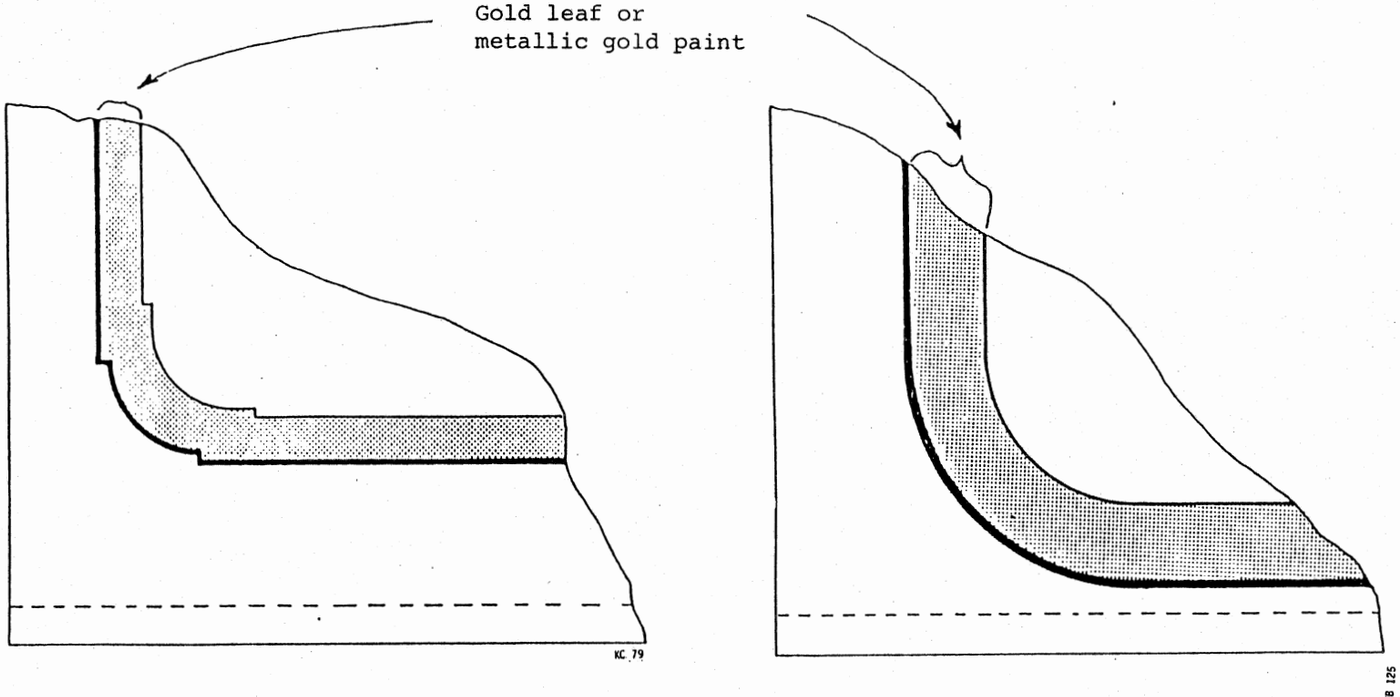
If the shade was intended to remain in the drawn position, a border design, closely paralleling the edge of the shade, was a common added feature.

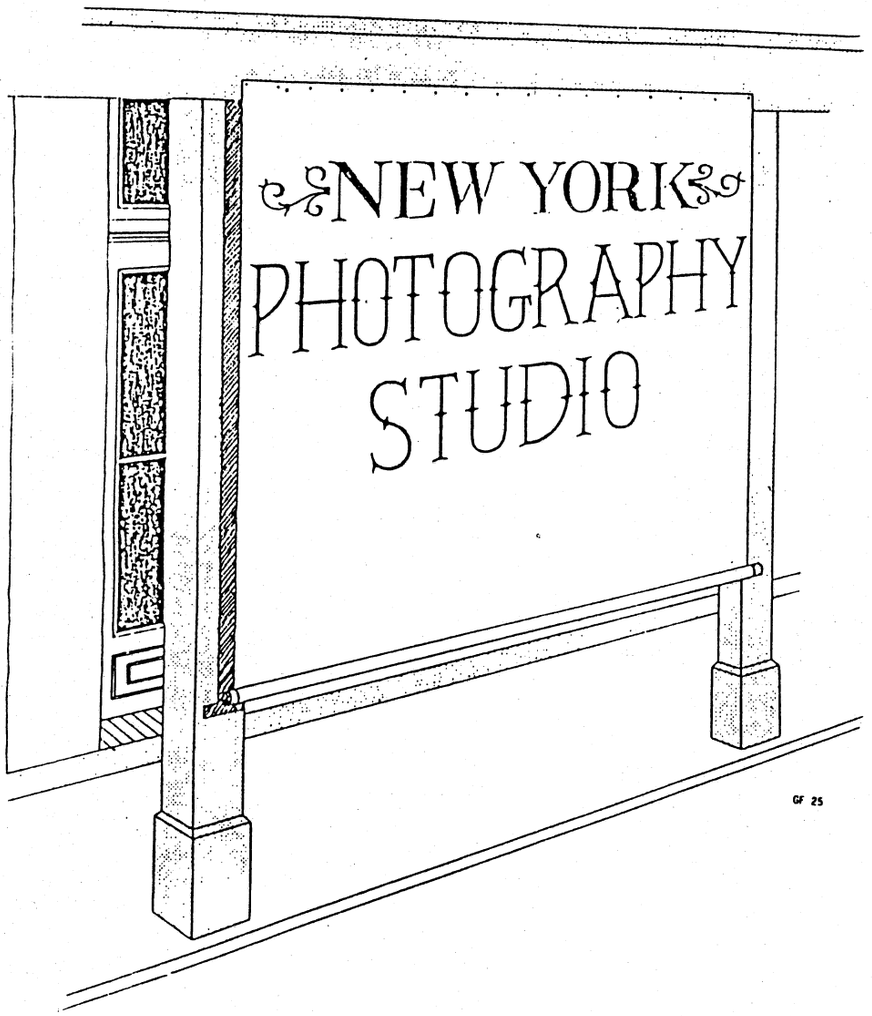


Enlarged corner of shade showing details of border design.



Details of three border designs for window shades.





14. SIGN PAINTED ON AN EXTERIOR CANVAS DROP SHADE. The chief function of the canvas drop was to provide shade for a shop in the late afternoon. Historically, most canvas shades in Sacramento were mounted on south and west exposures. All canvas shades must be functional. Shades must have the built-in capability to be raised and lowered by rope and pulley systems consistent with the historic period. Hand-crank mechanisms were not characteristic of the interpretive period and are prohibited. Canvas drops must be located on or just below the canopy fascia on the street side of the canopy posts.

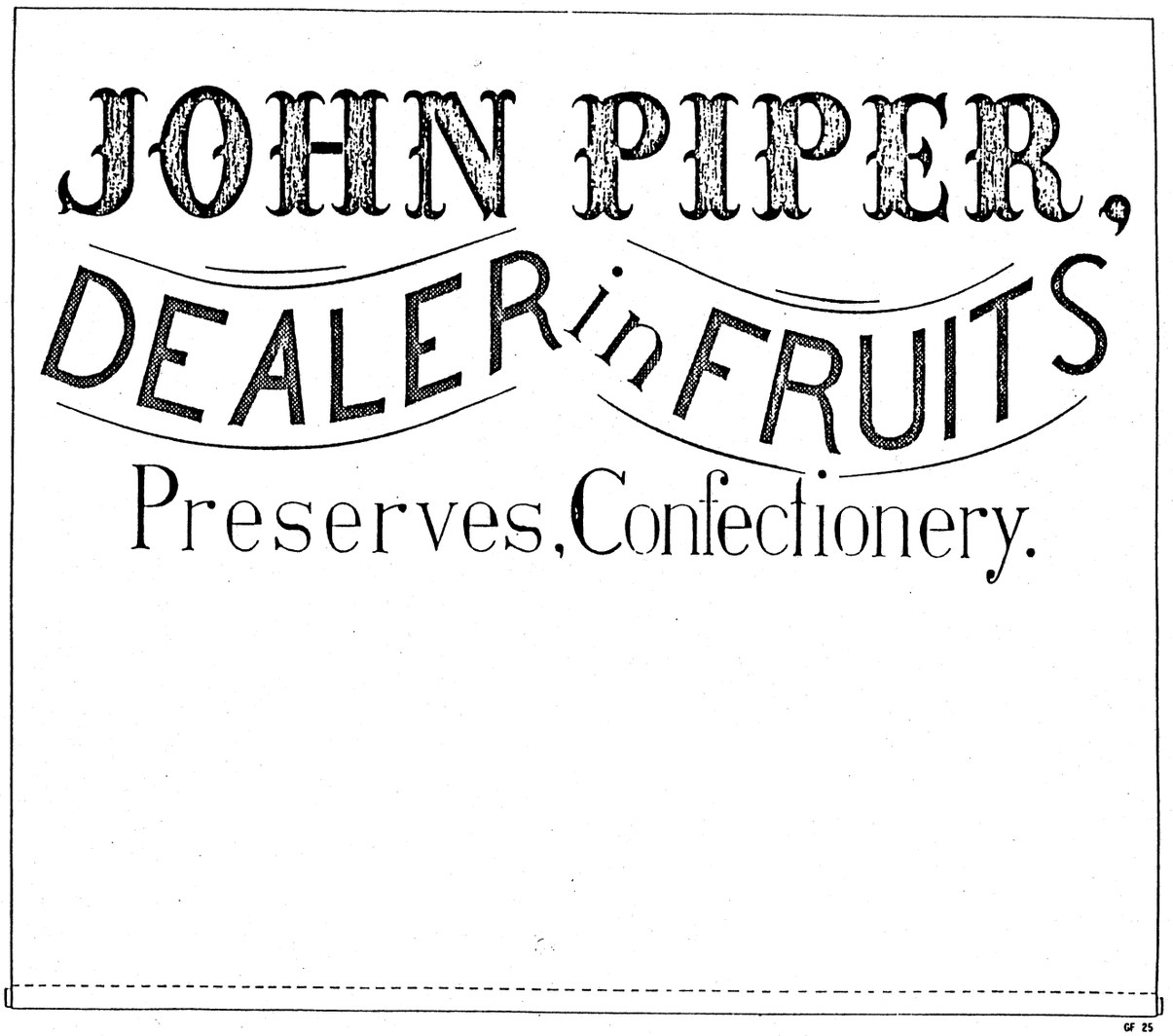
Canvas drop shades commonly incorporated small canvas manufacture/fabricator stencils. Often each piece of canvas

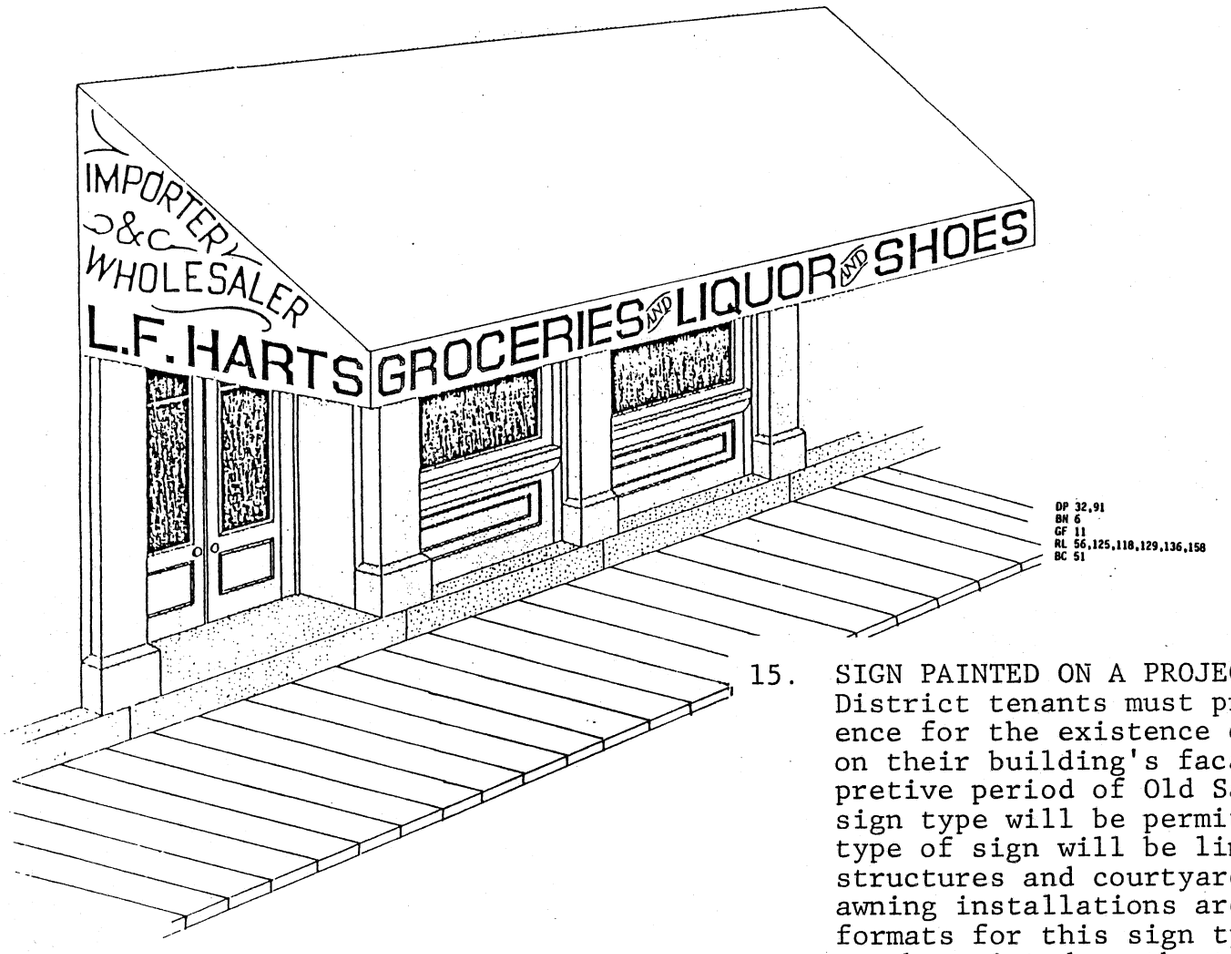
(continued on page 156)

Historic style hardware should be used for all sign installations. Wind slots and cutouts for street lamps or other obstructions will not be allowed. Chains should not be used to secure the lower part of the shade to a column or post. The width of a canopy or balcony bay determines the width of the drop shade. In general, the canvas should be left its natural color. More ornate letter styles can be utilized on this sign type. See section entitled TYPEFACES on page 71.

used in making the sign was stenciled. However, no consistent pattern has been uncovered which explains the reasoning behind the location of many stencils on historic canvas products. Some historic stenciling appears to have been applied to the canvas material before it was assembled into a finished awning. This is reflected in a totally random placement and orientation (sometimes upside down!) of the manufacturer's identity stencil. It is recommended that today's stencil be centered, or located in the lower left or right corners (front or back) of the canvas signs.

Another example of a canvas drop shade.



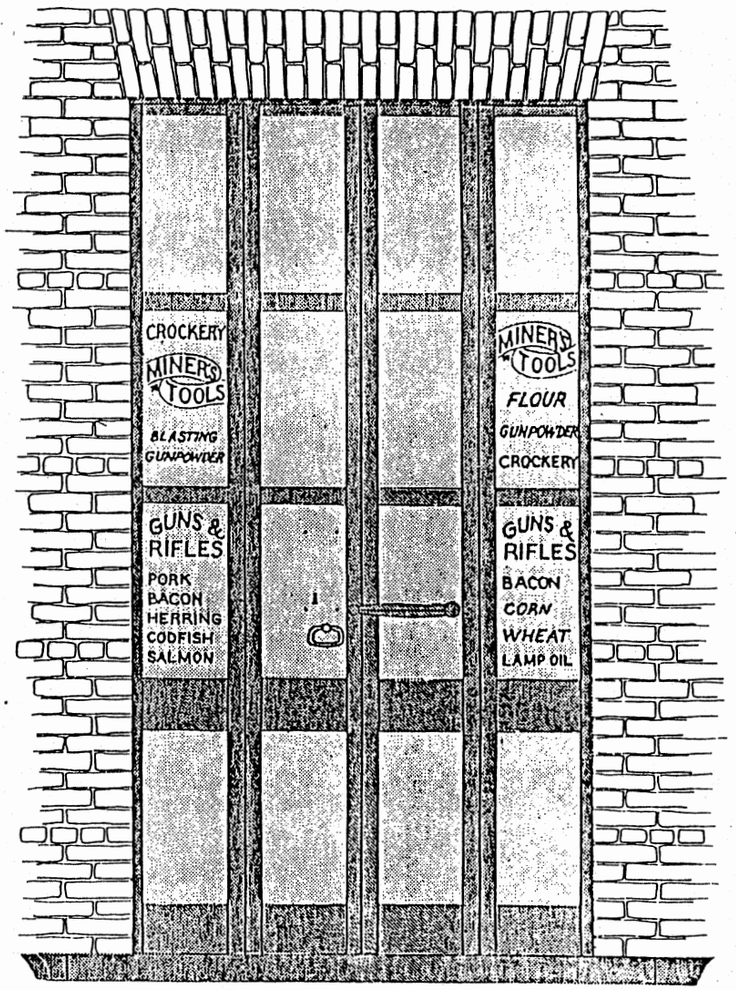


15. SIGN PAINTED ON A PROJECTING CANVAS AWNING. District tenants must provide historic evidence for the existence of this type of awning on their building's facade during the interpretive period of Old Sacramento before this sign type will be permitted. Generally, this type of sign will be limited to waterfront structures and courtyard use. "Wedge" shaped awning installations are the only acceptable formats for this sign type. Advertisements may be painted on the triangular ends, sloped top, or the vertical, front face of the awning.

On occasion, the canvas awning was composed of separate pieces of material for the top slope, vertical face and end triangles. In these cases, the end triangles or vertical face pieces could be displayed alone without the sloped top to form signs.

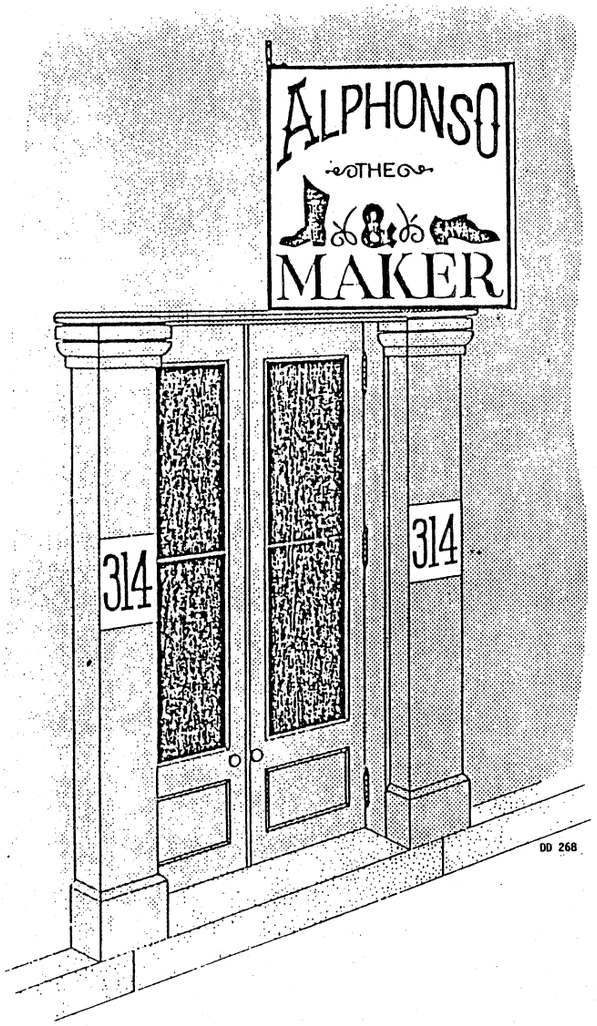
Awnings often incorporated small canvas manufacture/dealer stencils.

16. SIGN PAINTED ON IRON SHUTTER PANELS. In the example illustrated, the advertisement is visible with the shutters opened or closed.

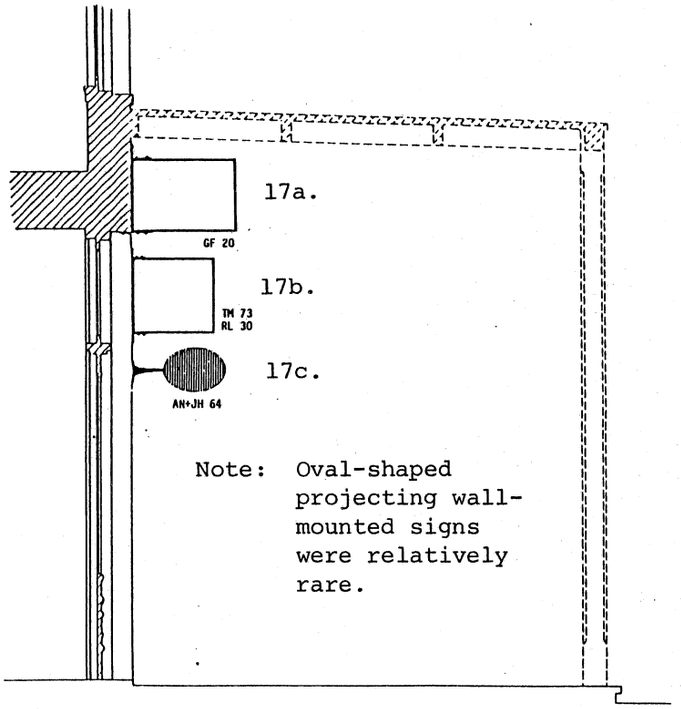


17. FRAMED, WOODEN SIGNBOARD PROJECTING FROM THE FACE OF A BUILDING.

(C)

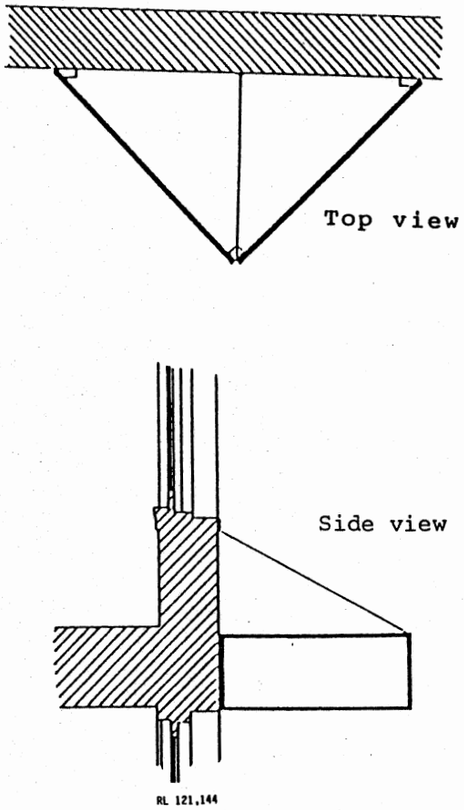


Three projecting sign installations 17a-17c.

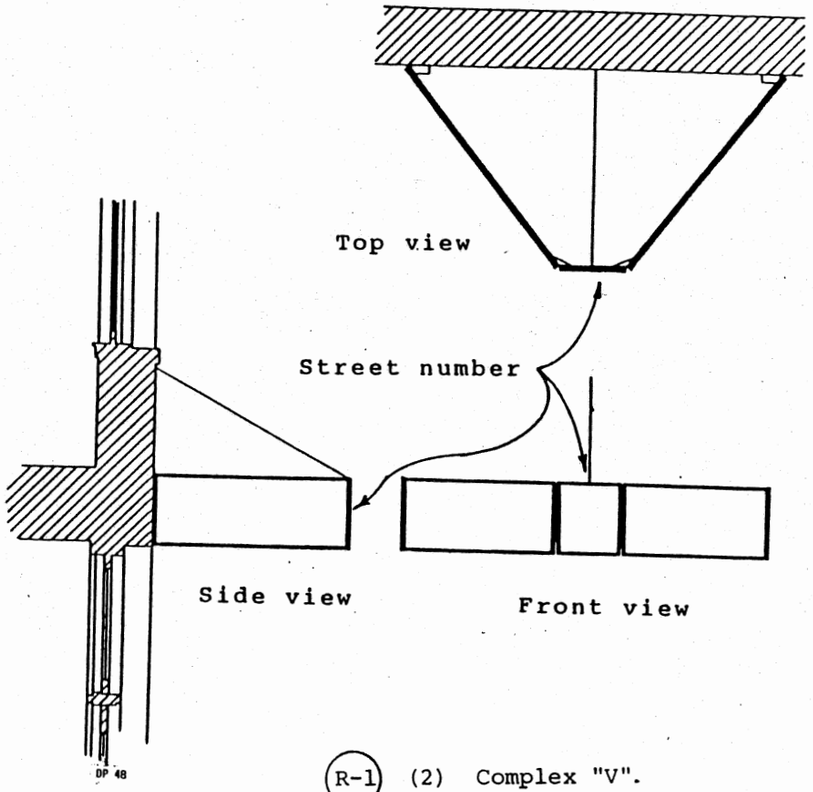


Note: Oval-shaped projecting wall-mounted signs were relatively rare.

Wire rods (commonly used historically), cables, or metal straps may be necessary to secure the sign to prevent wind damage. Some signs of this type were located at the end of short metal bars or rods (or castings) projecting from a building face as in example 17c. Rectangular formats were common, although square or near-square formats were used. (This is one of the few locations where a square sign format is acceptable.)

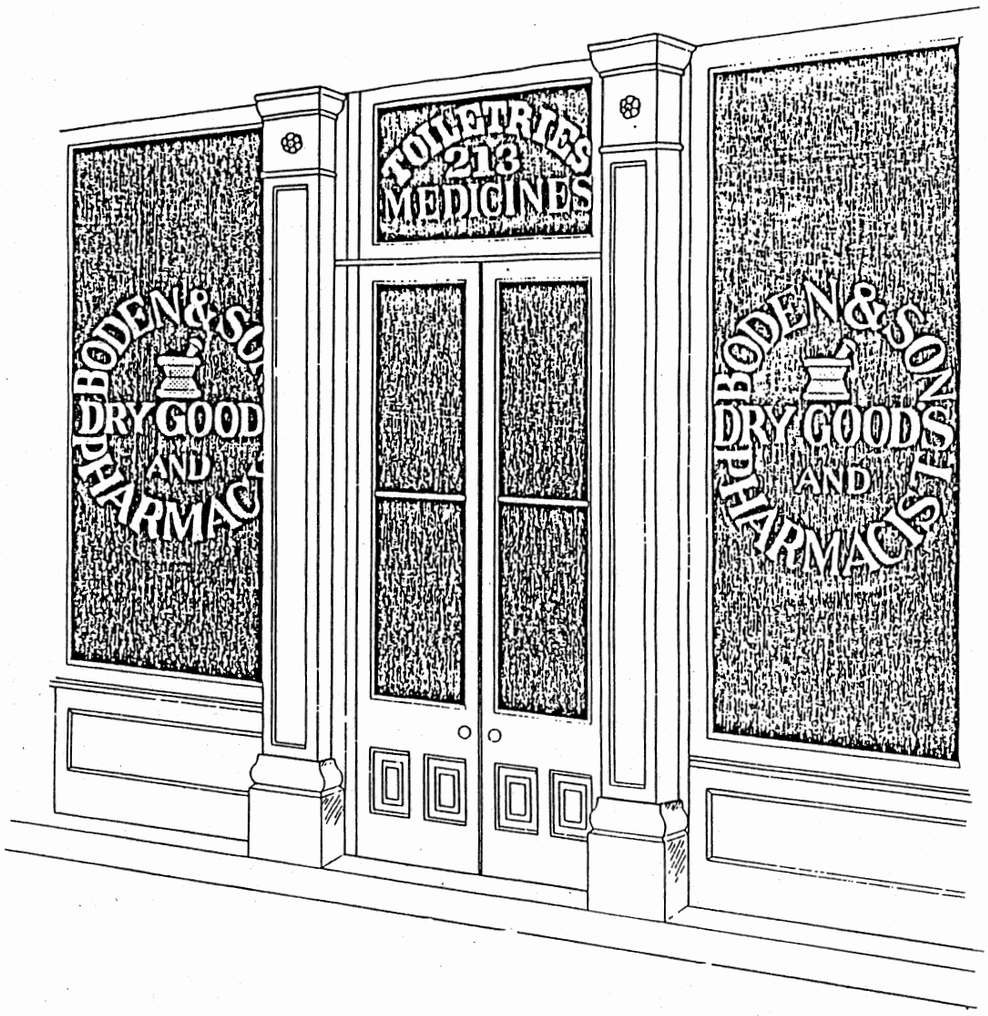


17d. "V"-SHAPED VARIATIONS.
R-2 (1) Simple "V".

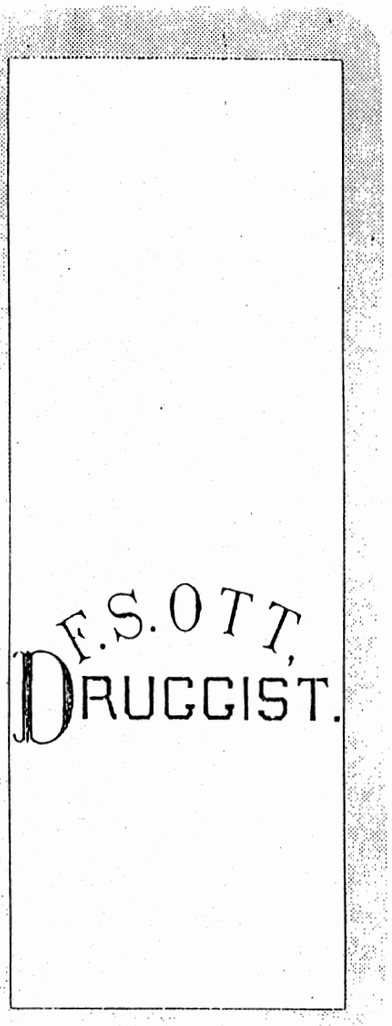


R-1 (2) Complex "V".

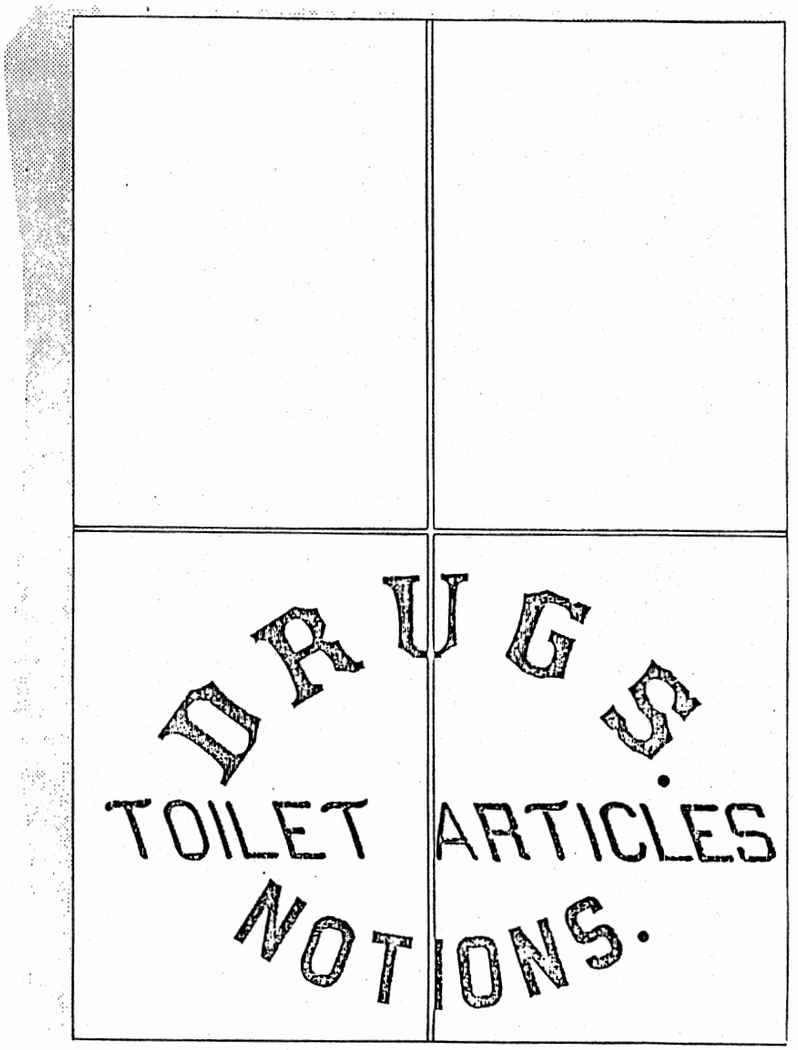
18. SIGN PAINTED ON WINDOW OR TRANSOM GLASS. Generally, door glass was not used for advertising. Sandblasted or acid-etched exterior glass signs are not historically correct and are prohibited. (C)



Window sign examples

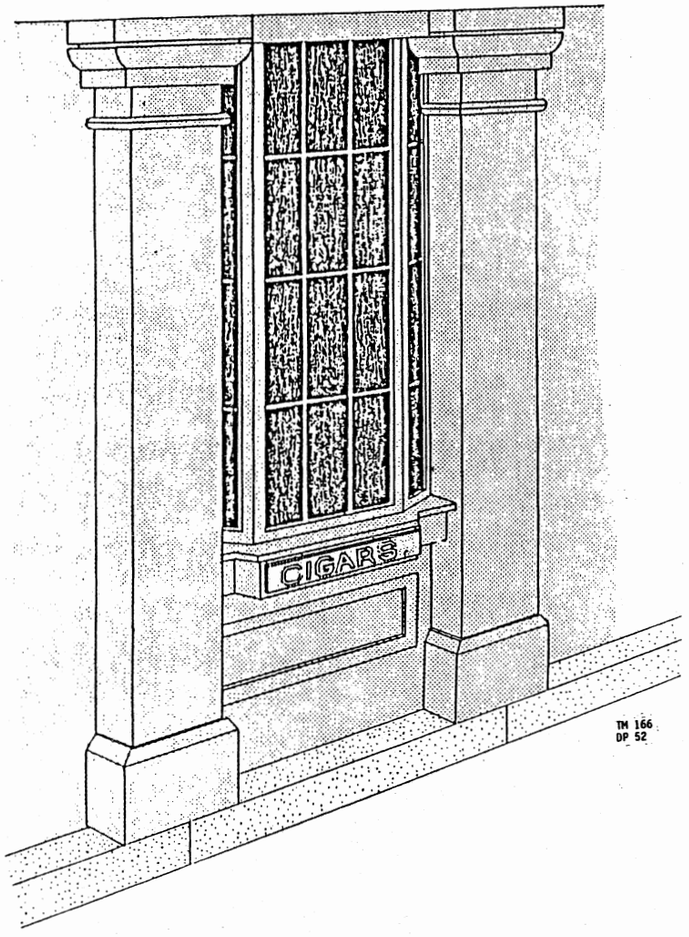


SMND 73/265/01
AN+JH 208

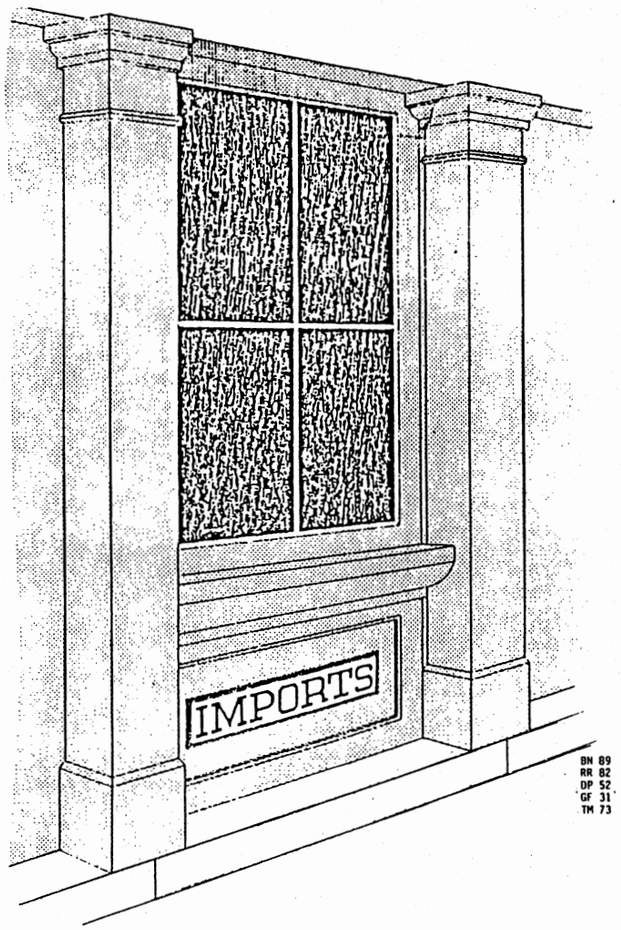


W.R. STRONG STORE
DUTCH FLAT, CALIFORNIA ca.1865

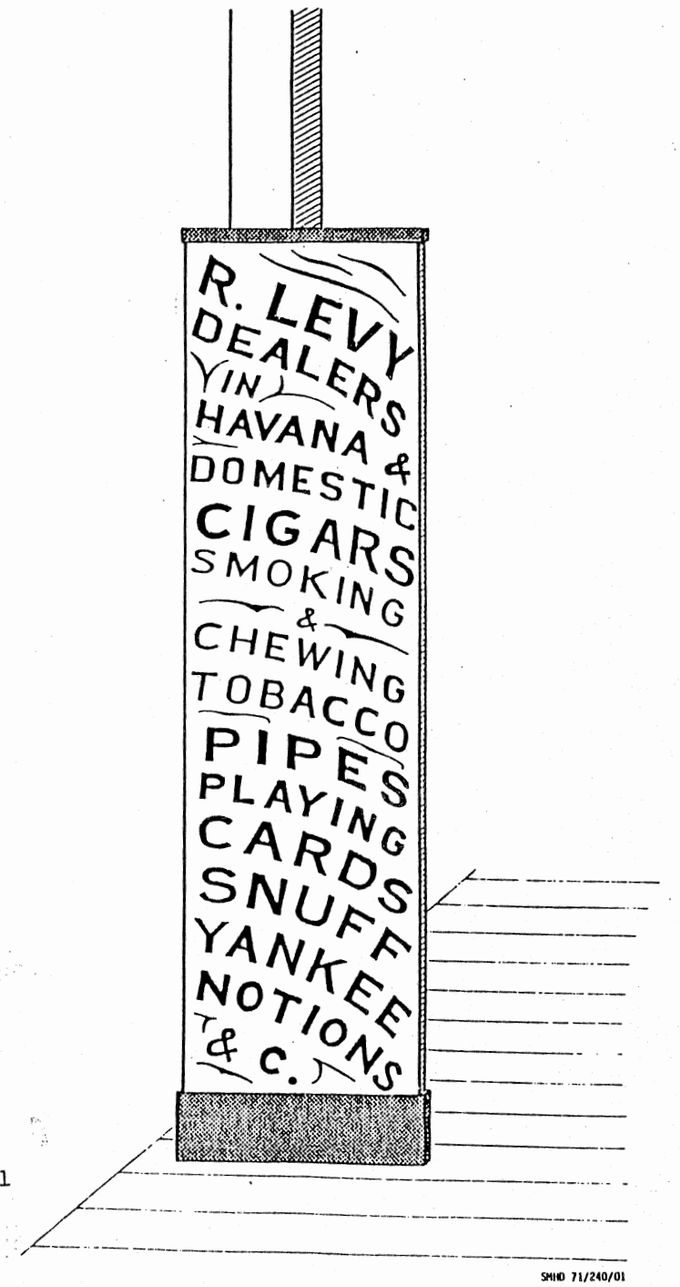
19. FRAMED OR FRAMELESS WOODEN SIGN, ATTACHED FLAT AGAINST THE FACE OF A WINDOW SILL. This type of sign was not mounted on doors. See sign type 6b on page 138 for the appropriate frameless design.



20. FRAMED OR FRAMELESS WOODEN SIGN MOUNTED FLAT BELOW A WINDOW SILL. This type of sign should not be placed on a door. See sign type 6b on page 138 for the appropriate frameless sign design.



21. FRAMED OR FRAMELESS, VERTICAL WOODEN SIGNBOARD ATTACHED TO A (CANOPY) COLUMN OR POST ON THE SIDEWALK. This type of sign is not to be free-standing, but is secured to a canopy column or post. Its face can be parallel or at right angles to the street.

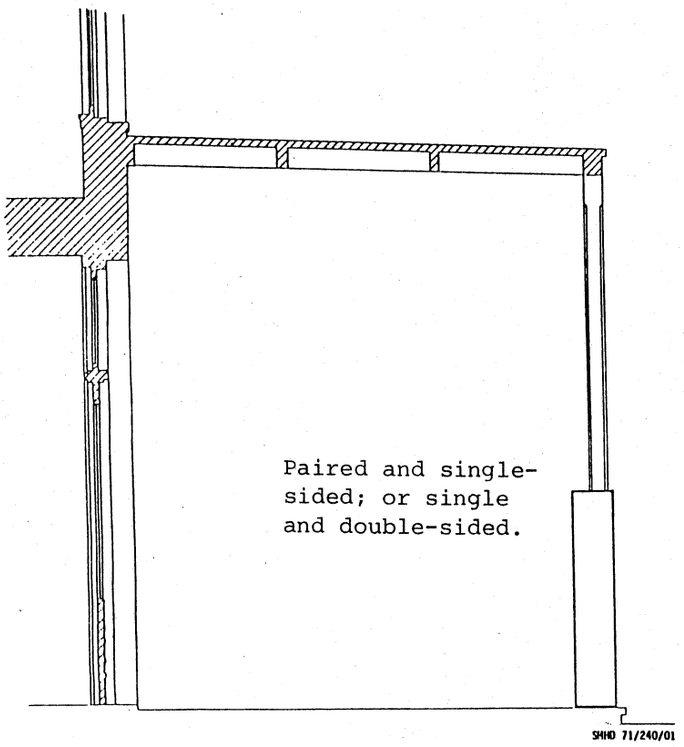


SMHD 71/240/01

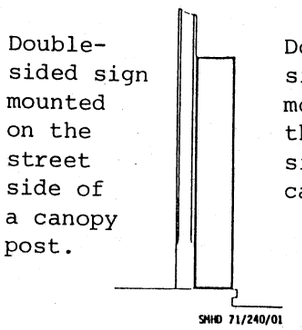
An example of a double-sided sign. Notice that the layout would have to be different on the reverse side of this sign.

This sign has a base and cap trim piece, but no side framing members (the detailing is vaguely reflective of elements on a classical column). These signs could also have conventional frames encircling the entire signboard.

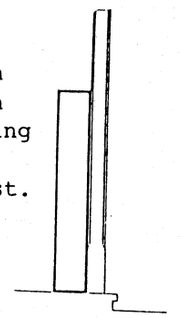
Examples of some installation variations (21a-21e). These signs can be single, paired or double-sided.



21a.

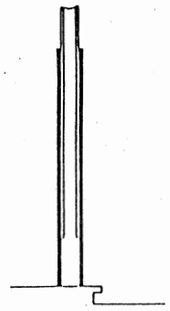


21b.



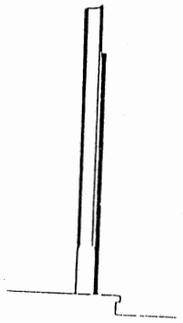
21c.

Paired signs mounted on either side of a canopy post parallel to the street.

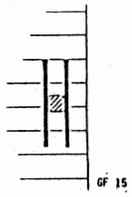


21d.

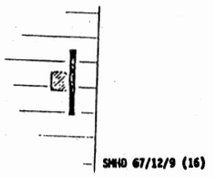
Single sign mounted on the street side of a canopy column parallel to the street.



21e.



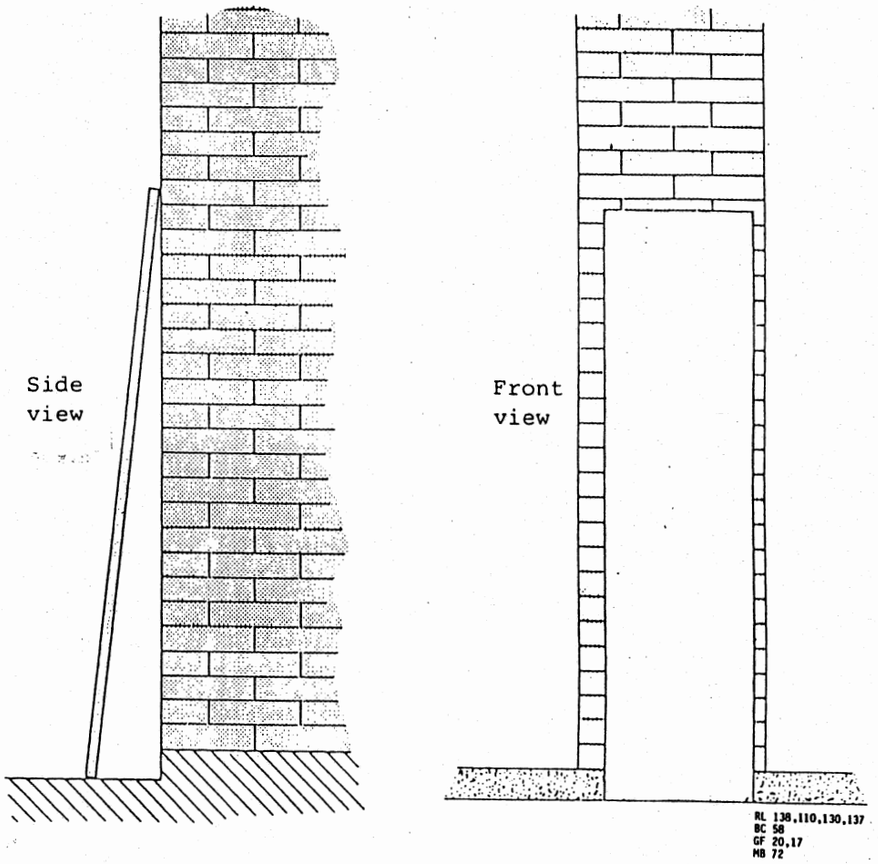
Cross-section of installation 21d.



Cross-section of installation 21e.

(C)

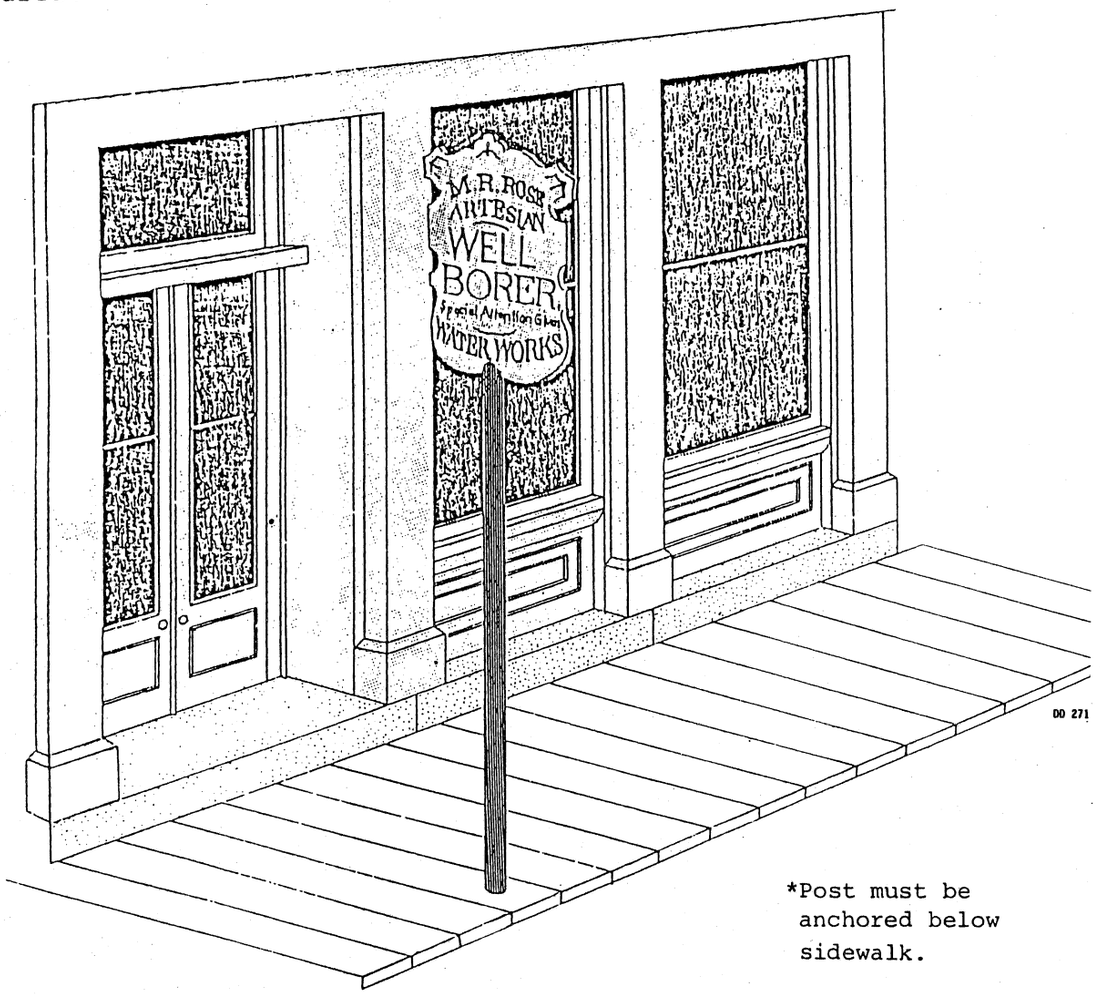
22. FRAMELESS WOODEN SIGNBOARD "LEANING" AGAINST THE BUILDING FACE. This sign must be secured to prevent it from being a hazardous nuisance.



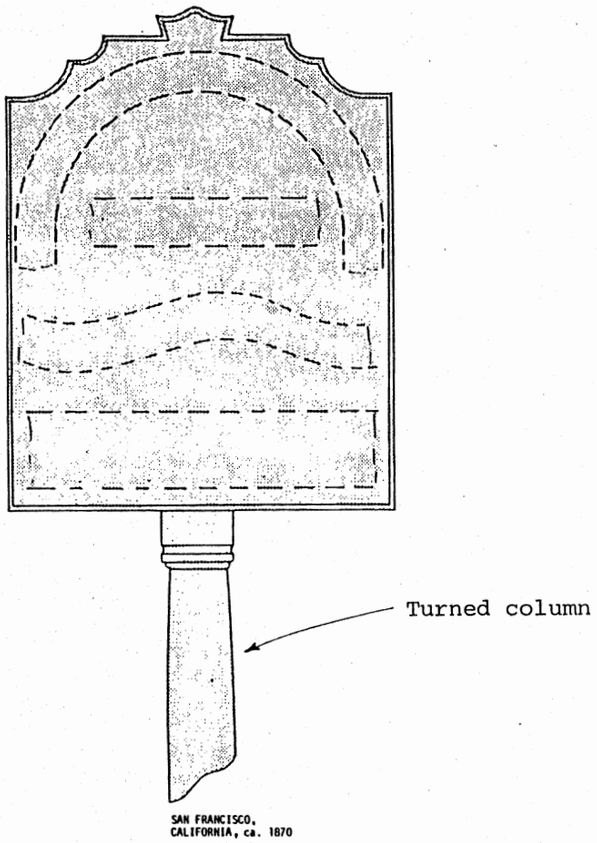
Generally, a "casual" word layout should be used with this type of sign. See page 68 for information pertaining to text layouts. This type of sign rarely was framed, but had a pin-striped border.

23. SIGN MOUNTED ON FREE-STANDING COLUMN OR POST.* Poles are installed near the edge of the wooden sidewalk. Except for some post-mounted product symbol advertisements, this kind of sign should be confined to buildings without canopy structures.

(C)



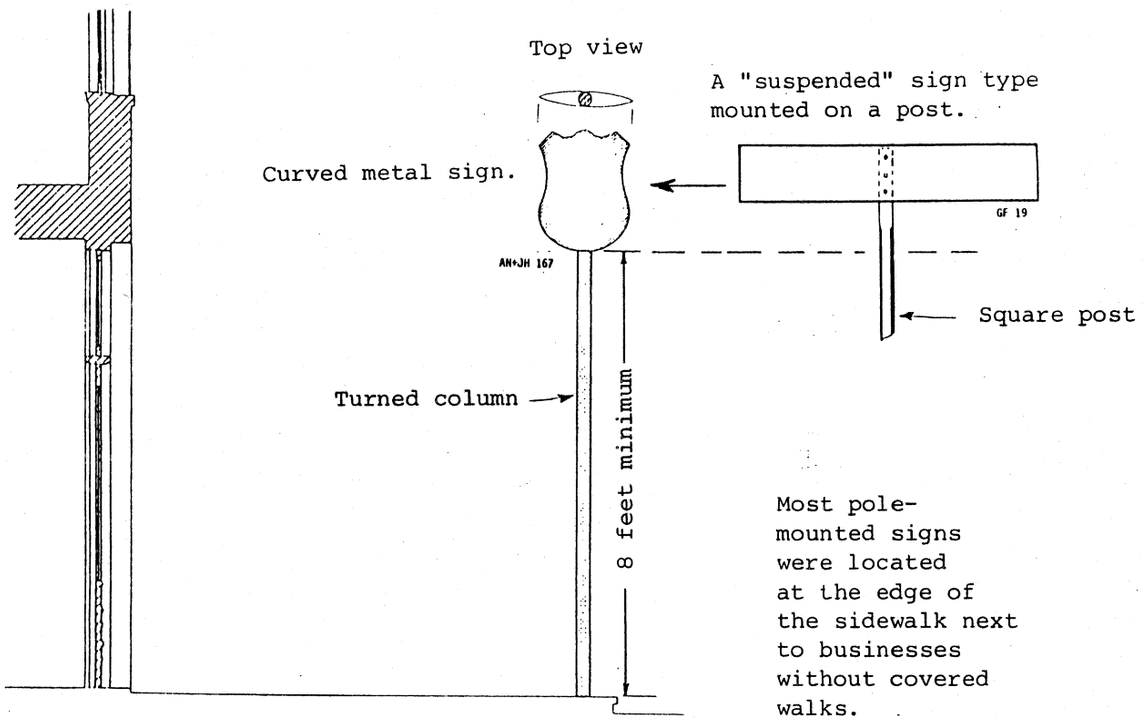
*Post must be anchored below sidewalk.



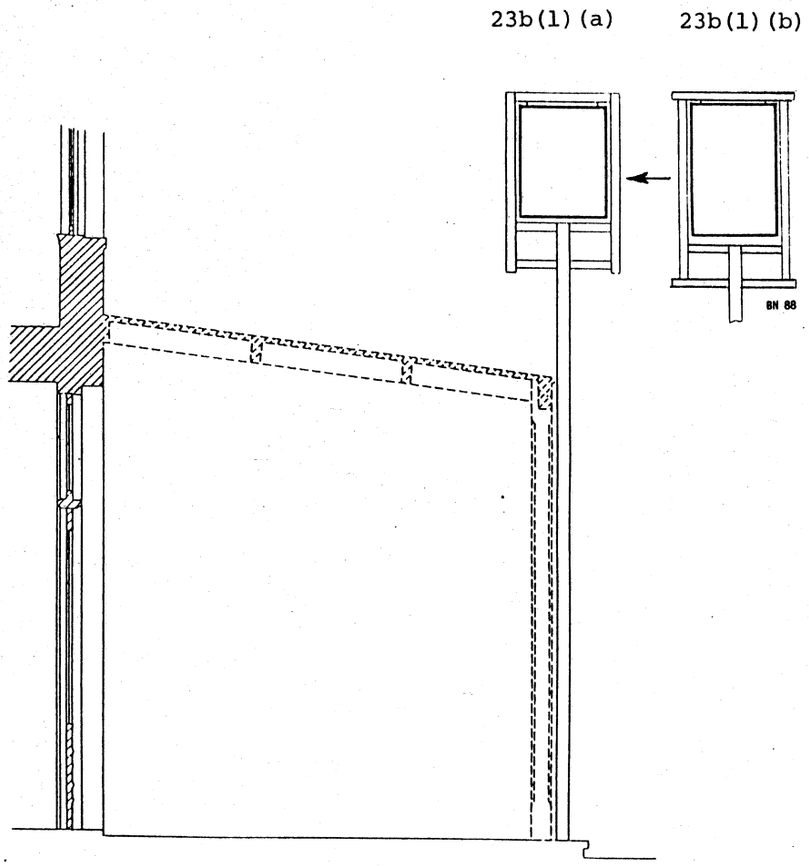
An example of a pole-mounted sign similar in shape to a wall-mounted signboard. A typical word layout is indicated by dashed lines.

23a. General use pole-mounted sign types. Most pole-mounted signs should be constructed of wood. The range of sign shapes include those used on wall-mounted signs and some suspended sign types (see page 172). Turned or square wooden posts may support the sign. The square posts can be chamfered as well as left unpainted.

Occasionally, a pair of curved metal signs may be mounted at the top of a free-standing turned column. Each sign face should be composed of an individual piece of metal curved around a wooden frame and joined at the outer edges.


Top view
A "suspended" sign type mounted on a post.
Curved metal sign.
GF 19
AN+JH 167
Square post
Turned column
8 feet minimum
Most pole-mounted signs were located at the edge of the sidewalk next to businesses without covered walks.

Inn or hotel
product symbol
sign variant
alternate designs
23b(1)(a) and 23b (1)(b)



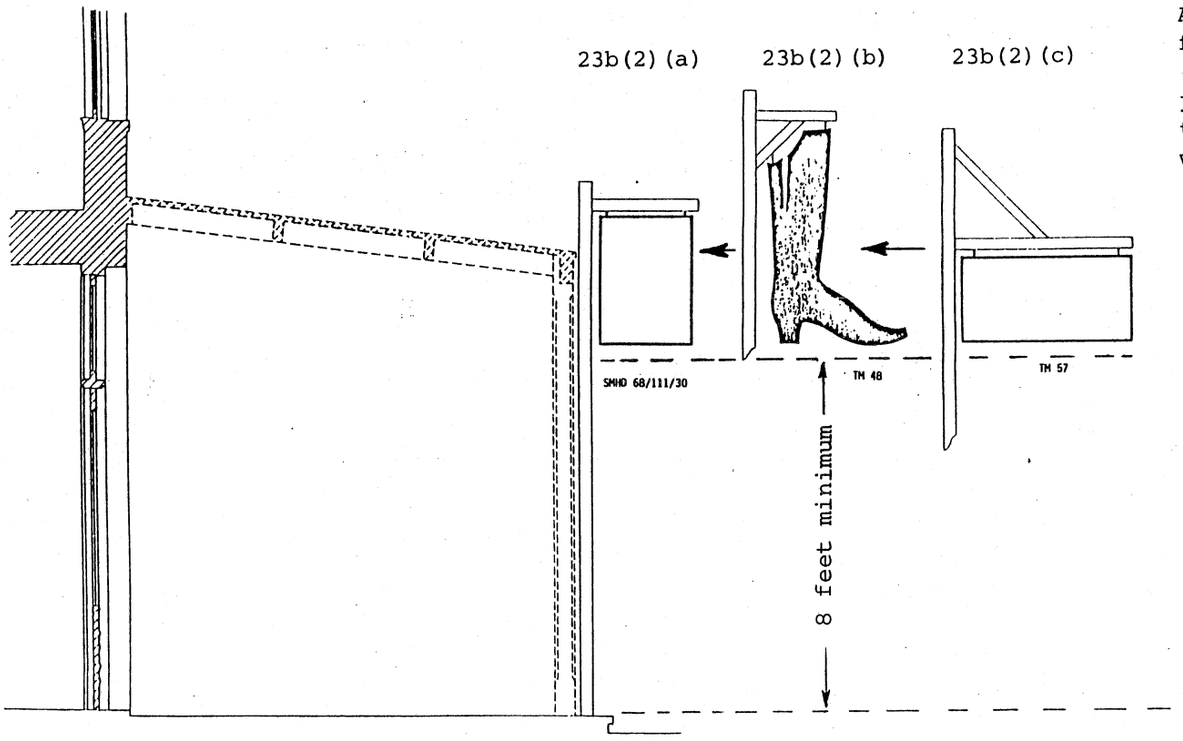
23b. Specialized pole-mounted signs for use exclusively with product symbols.

(1) Inn or hotel variant. This variation of the pole-mounted sign will be allowed only for use with commercial hotel or apartment businesses within the Historic District. See PRODUCT SYMBOLS AND DISPLAYS section on page 21.

Historically, these signs were installed using a square post with a mortised and tenoned head frame. The square support post and head frame may be chamfered and left unpainted. A conventionally framed rectangular sign was installed within the encircling support framework.

The historical hotel signboard was suspended from above and left free-swinging. Present-day construction codes, however, require that today's signs be fixed.

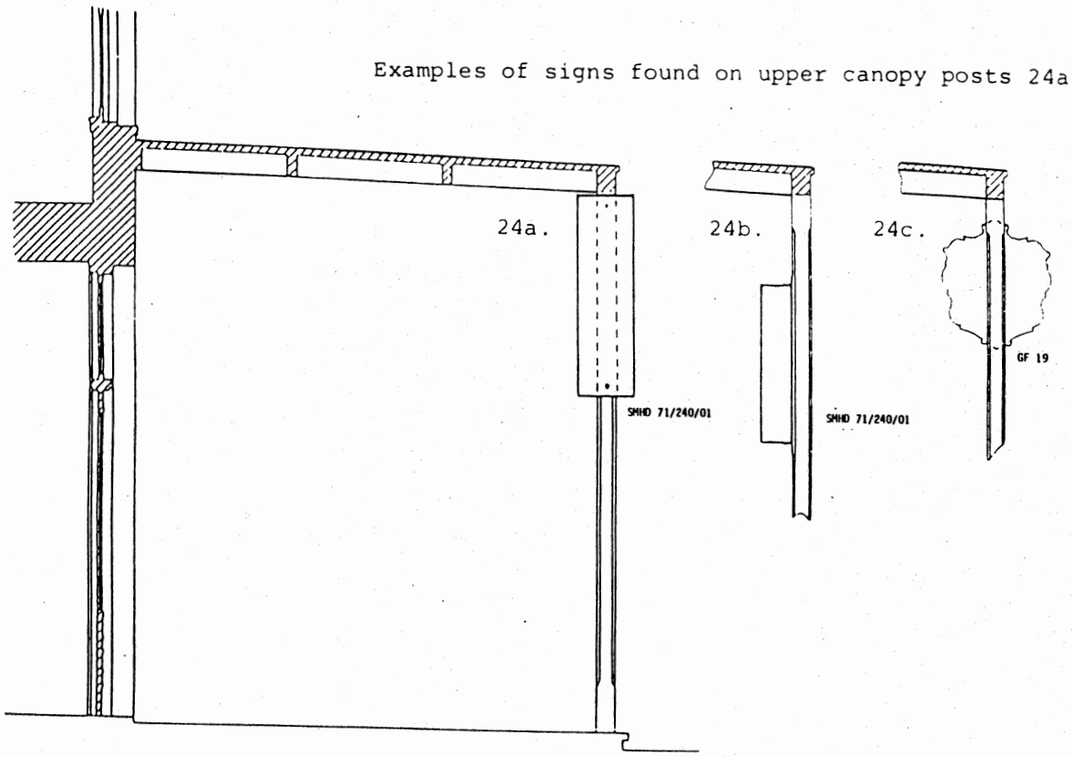
(2) Common product symbol variants. These variations of the pole-mounted sign will only be allowed for use in conjunction with a hotel, saloon, stable, cooper, tailor, stage office, tack or harness shop, boot or shoe store, or jewelry store utilizing product symbols for advertising. See PRODUCT SYMBOLS AND DISPLAYS section on page 21. Historically, the signboard was suspended from above and free-swinging. Modern codes require the sign to be fixed. The square support post may be chamfered as well as left unpainted.



Alternate sign support framing 23b(2)(a)-23b(2)(c). Signs may project only 3 feet beyond the edge of the sidewalk. See page 27.

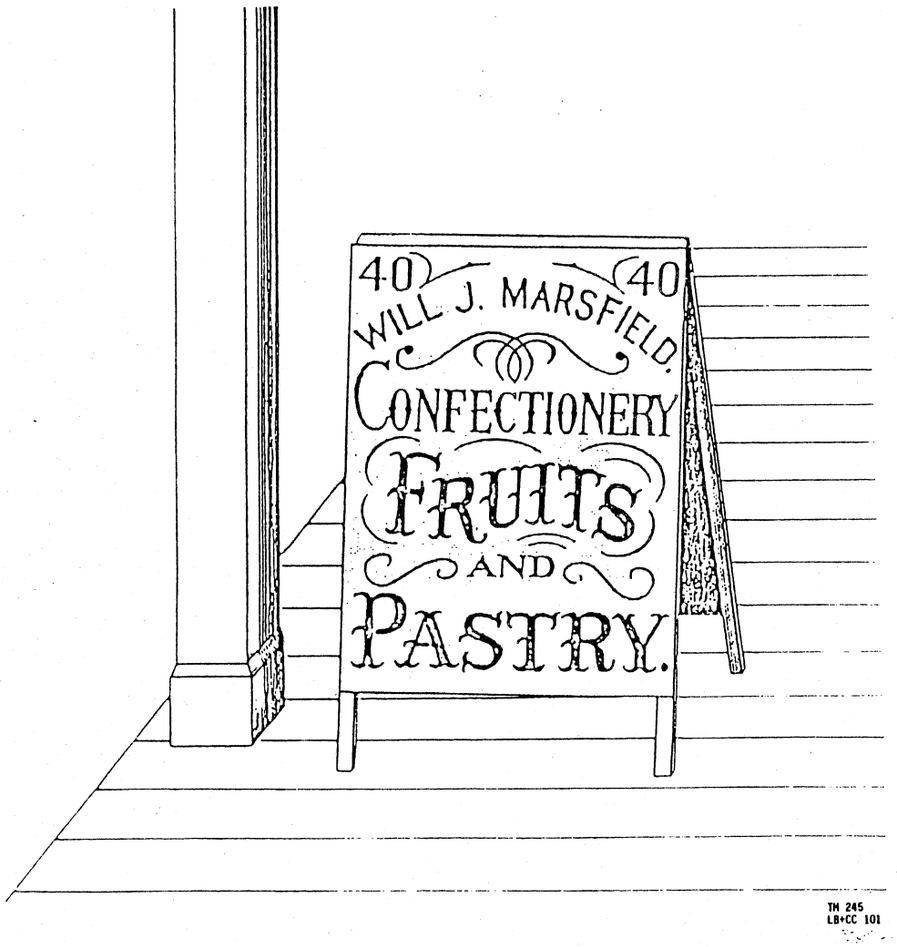
24. UPPER CANOPY, BALCONY COLUMN OR POST SIGNS. These signs are similar to pole-mounted signs (excluding the product symbol variants). Vertical, framed wooden signs (as shown in examples a and b below) were also used here.

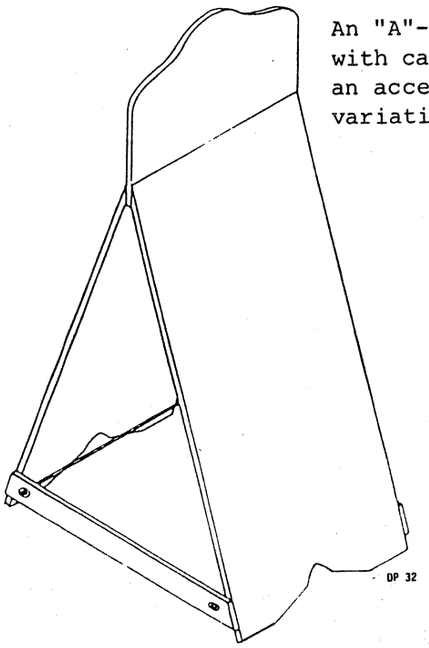
Examples of signs found on upper canopy posts 24a - 24c.



25. WOODEN, A-FRAME SIGN. A rare type for the era portrayed by Old Sacramento. Signs should not exceed 4 feet in vertical dimension.

R-4

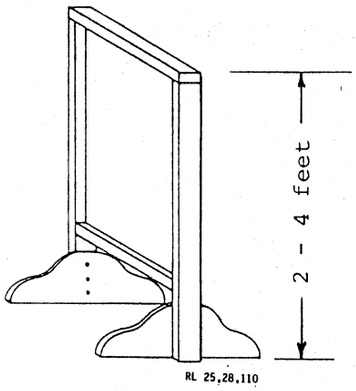




An "A"-frame with cap is an acceptable variation

25a. SIMPLE VERTICAL FACE DOUBLE SIDED SIGN WITH WOODEN BASE.

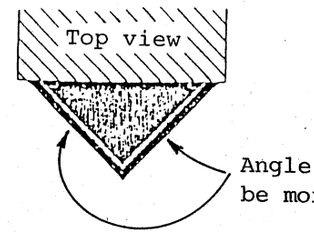
R-4



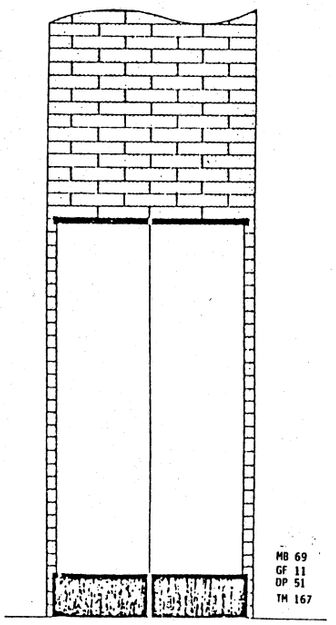
(R-3) 26. TRIANGULAR SIGN, SET ON THE SIDEWALK. Similar in shape to wall-mounted signs (sometimes mounted on legs, as in the example). Maximum height is 7 feet. Signs may encircle canopy columns, posts or street lamps as indicated by the example.

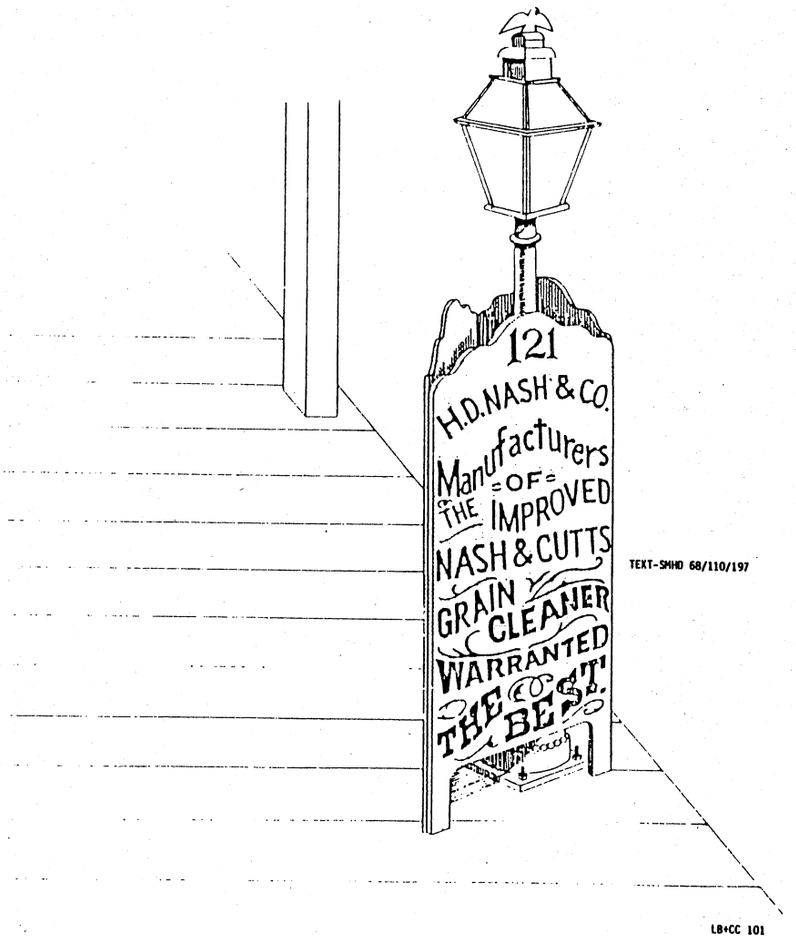
VARIATIONS:

26a. Sign placed against a wall.



Front view

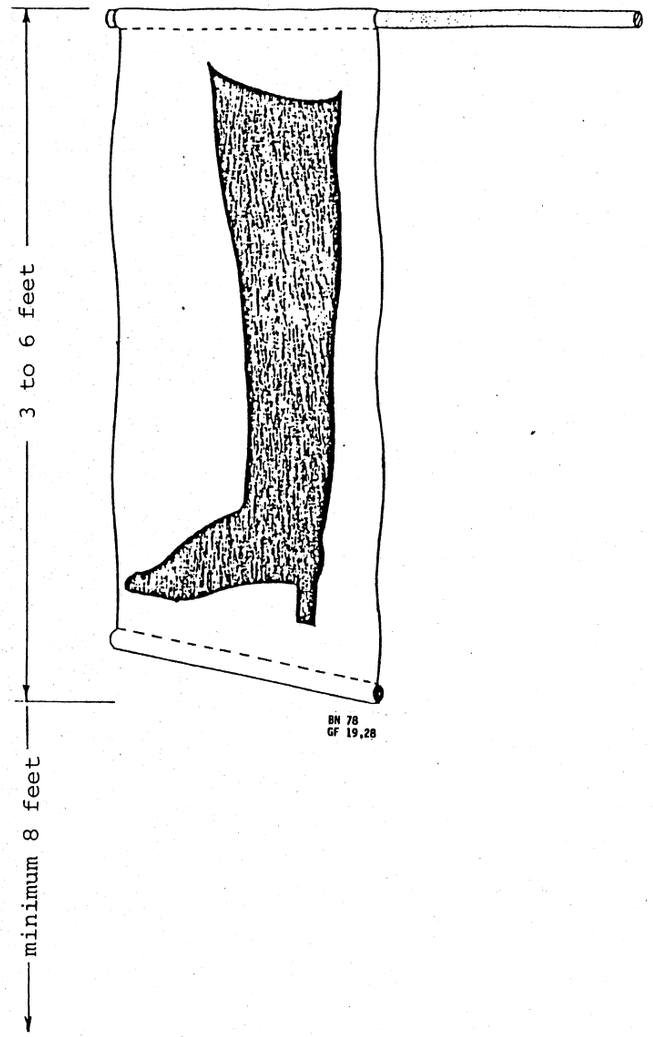




27. PRODUCT SYMBOLS AND DISPLAYS LOCATED ON THE SIDEWALK OR PROJECTING FROM A WALL. See PRODUCT SYMBOLS AND DISPLAYS section beginning on page 21 for more information and restrictions.

28. SALOON, THEATER, HOTEL AND STAGE GAS LAMPS. Gas lamps used for this kind of advertising were prismatic or spherical in design during the historic period. Drum-shaped lamps date from a later period. See PRODUCT SYMBOLS AND DISPLAYS section beginning on page 21 for further information and restrictions.

A banner utilizing the boot product symbol for advertising men's footwear

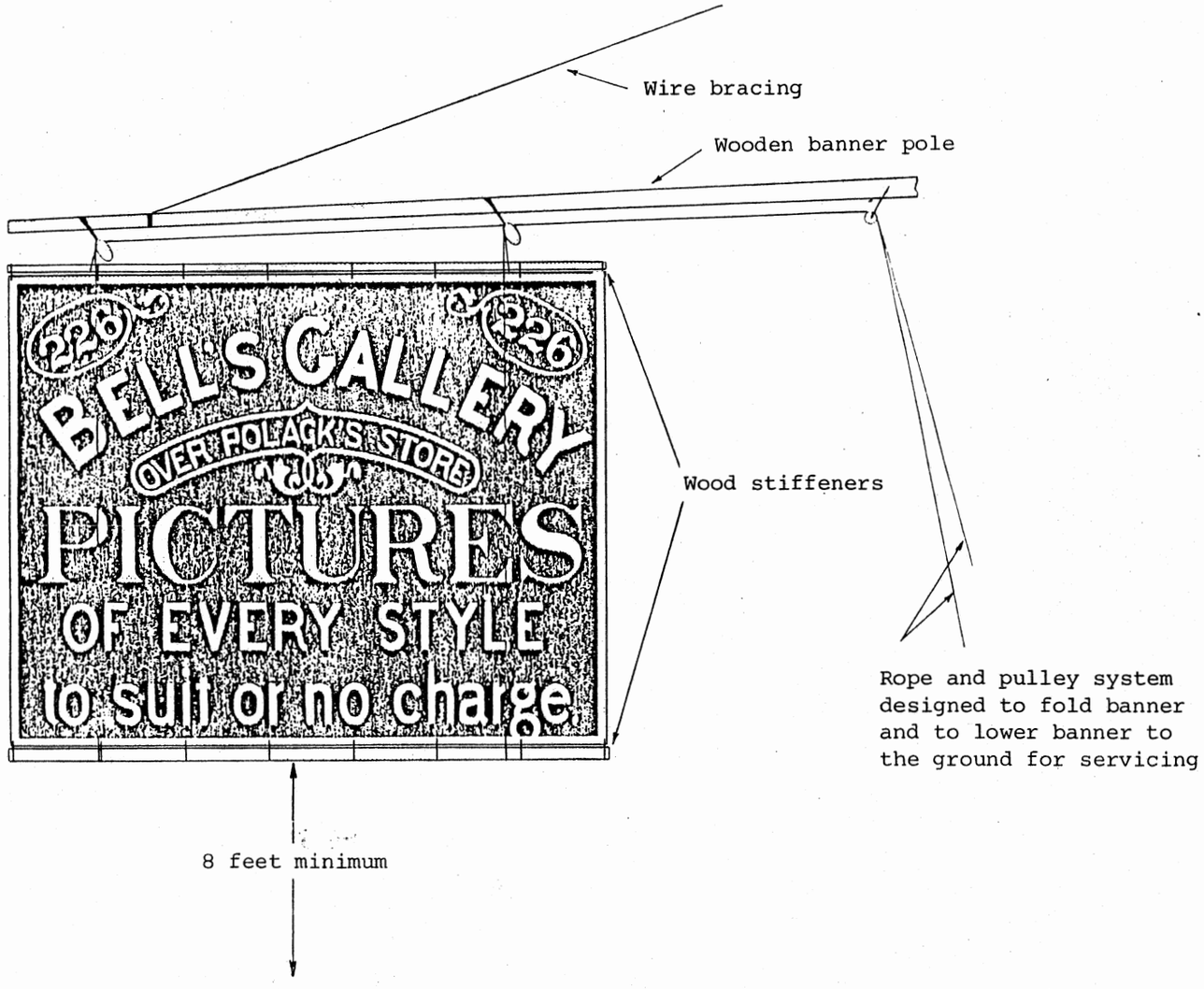


29. FLAGPOLES, FLAGS AND BANNERS.
Most flags and flagpoles exist in the area of the facade reserved exclusively for historic signs and are not available for commercial advertising. See page 6. Historically, most flagpoles were only used to fly the national colors.

Present day versions of United States flag are acceptable. (In 1849, there were 30 stars on the flag; in 1875, 37 stars were present.) Building tenants wishing a flagpole must have verifiable evidence of its existance on their building in the interpretive period. Rectangular, vertically oriented cloth banners were used occasionally on the first floor when there was no canopy or balcony structure. These were primarily used for product symbol advertising. See PRODUCT SYMBOLS AND DISPLAYS section beginning on page 21.

The California State flag was not adopted as the official State flag until 1911. During the Old Sacramento interpretive period, the national colors were generally flown alone.

More elaborate installation techniques were used with larger banners. A rope and pulley system was sometimes used to raise and lower the banner. Bracing of the wooden pole was necessary with larger banners.



(C) 30. Signs may be attached to the railing surrounding an exterior basement entry. (not illustrated) RL 22

31. Signs may be attached to the risers of exterior stairs. (not illustrated) MB 72

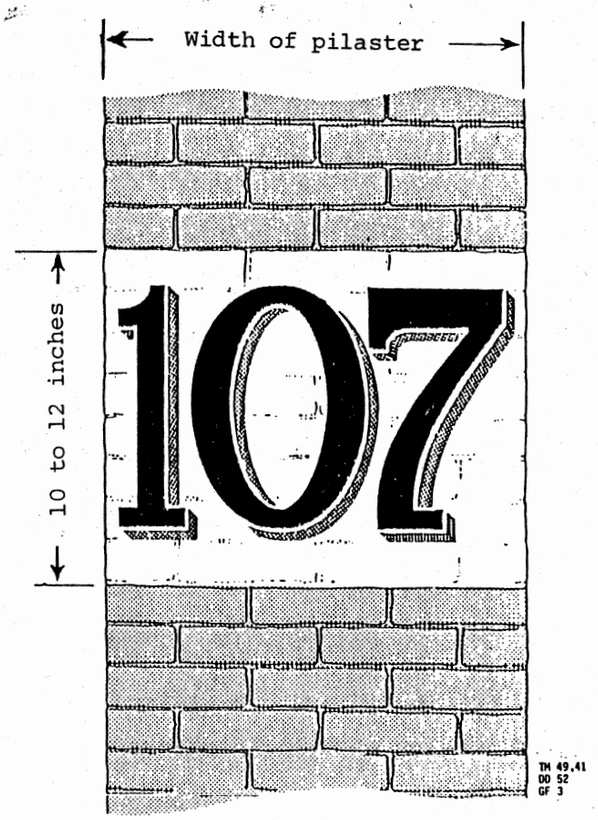
NO OTHER SIGN TYPES WILL BE ALLOWED

ON THE STREET FACADES IN OLD SACRAMENTO

B. STREET ADDRESSES

All street addresses are to be of a design appropri- for the Historic District. Building addresses in the period represented by Old Sacramento, never included the street name or word "street". In rare instances, the abbreviation "No." for number was used. Street numbers should not be placed on door glass or door wood work. The correct means for displaying street addresses are as follows:

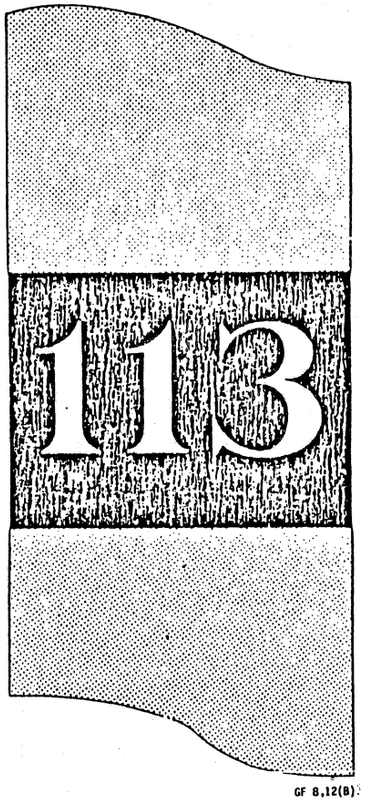
(C) 1. A WHITE BAND OR BLOCK WITH BLACK NUMERALS, OFTEN WITH A GRAY SHADOW, PAINTED ON AN EXPOSED BRICK PILASTER.



Painted bands were commonly 10 to 12 inches tall. Often several adjacent pilasters were painted in this fashion. If the brick panel or pilaster was too wide to use the continuous painted band, a white block was painted in the center of the brick panel large enough to receive the numerals. Sometimes these blocks were encircled by a narrow black band, often with the corners rounded or concave. Street addresses were most often located at eye level. Numerals suitable for the period can be found in Appendix A.

The businesses proprietor's name was occasionally included within the street address block.

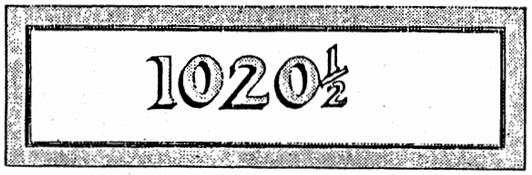
2. DARK BAND OR BLOCK WITH LIGHT-COLORED NUMERAL, PAINTED ON LIGHT-COLORED PLASTER OR PAINTED BRICK PILASTER. Similar in other details to Street Address Type 1. (C)



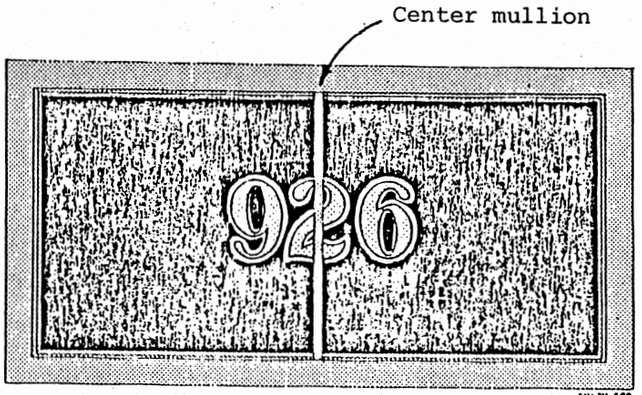
The proprietor's name was occasionally included within the street address block.

3. PAINTED SHEET METAL OR THIN WOODEN SQUARE ATTACHED TO A PILASTER; similar in appearance and location to street address type 1. or 2.

(C) 4. PAINTED AND GOLD-LEAF TRANSOM GLASS. Street addresses should appear symetrical on the transom, even when there is a center mullion.

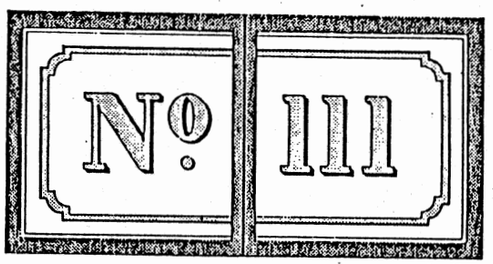


AN+JH 163,212
SMHO 73/265/01



AN+JH 163

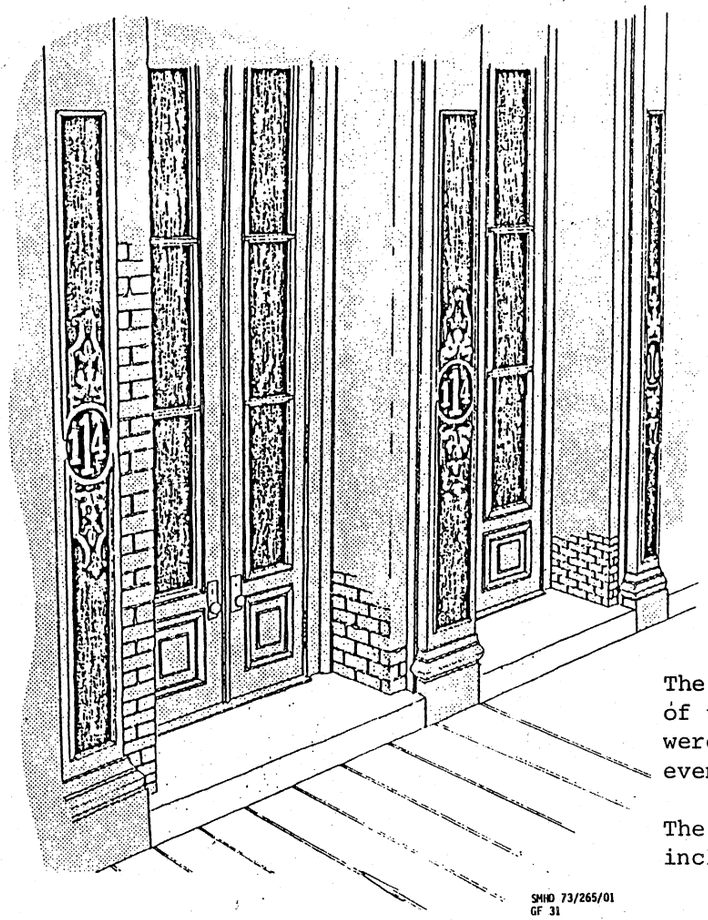
(R) 5. STREET ADDRESS PAINTED ON A SHADE OR CURTAIN FIXED IN THE DRAWN POSITION BEHIND A GLASS TRANSOM. Shade should be made of cloth and not plastic. Gold leaf was sometimes used in the design of this type of street address.



TM 166
AN+JH 163

6. PAINTED NUMERALS IN SPECIALIZED AREAS OF CAST IRON PILASTERS. In the mid-19th Century, cast iron pilasters were introduced which incorporated in their design flat, circular, or rectangular areas for painting street addreses. Subsequent, matching cast iron pilasters across building's facade, were commonly painted with the street address. (C)

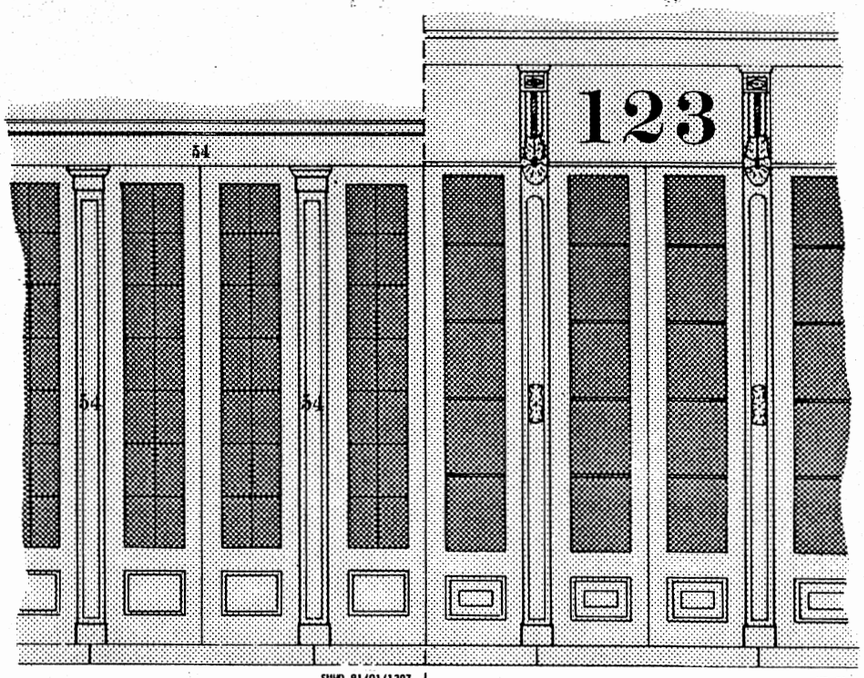
Street addresses were also occasionally painted on cast columns without the designated space.



The example illustrated is unusual in that the height of the individual numerals varies. Street numerals were more commonly uniform in their vertical dimension, even when used in a circular space.

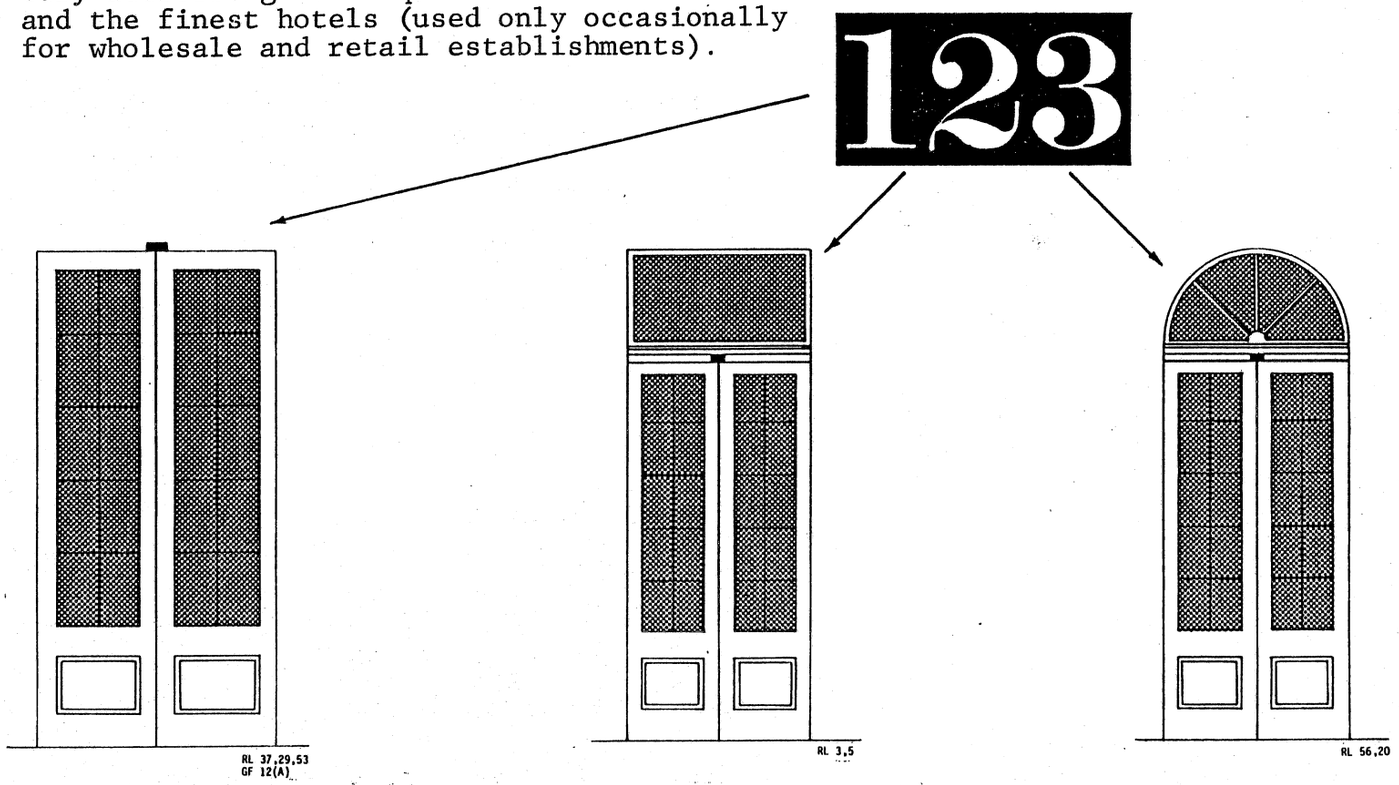
The business or proprietor's name was occasionally included within the street address space.

7. NUMERALS PAINTED OVER THE FIRST FLOOR DOORS. This addressing technique is used when a building has cast iron columns without the specialized areas for street address numbers and first floor doors without a transom. The street address numbers were commonly centered above the door opening. Sometimes the numbers were enlarged to fill an architectural space above the doors, as in example 7b. Normally the numbers are kept small as in 7a. In examples 7a. and 7b., the street number is painted directly on the exterior of the building without a separate background block as used in street address type 8. Example 7a. also demonstrates the painting of street numbers on cast columns <u>without</u> the designed-in address feature.



a. b.

8. WHITE PAINTED NUMERALS IN A SMALL, BLACK RECTANGLE (OCCASIONALLY AN OVAL) CENTERED OVER THE FIRST FLOOR DOORS. This was a common 19th Century addressing technique used for residences and the finest hotels (used only occasionally for wholesale and retail establishments).



9. Historically, street numbers were often incorporated into a building tenant's exterior signs. This occasionally included addresses in some forms of product symbol advertising. See STREET NUMBERS ON SIGNS in ELEMENTS OF 19TH CENTURY SIGNS beginning on page 101.

NO OTHER FORMS OF STREET ADDRESSES WILL BE ALLOWED IN OLD SACRAMENTO.

C. COURTYARD AND ALLEY SIGNS

Courtyard and alley signs must be of the same type and quality acceptable for street facades. Scale requirements, however, may be waived. In addition, no signs will be allowed to project into an alley right-of-way. See TYPICAL SIGN TYPES starting on page 123.

VI. SIGN FABRICATION

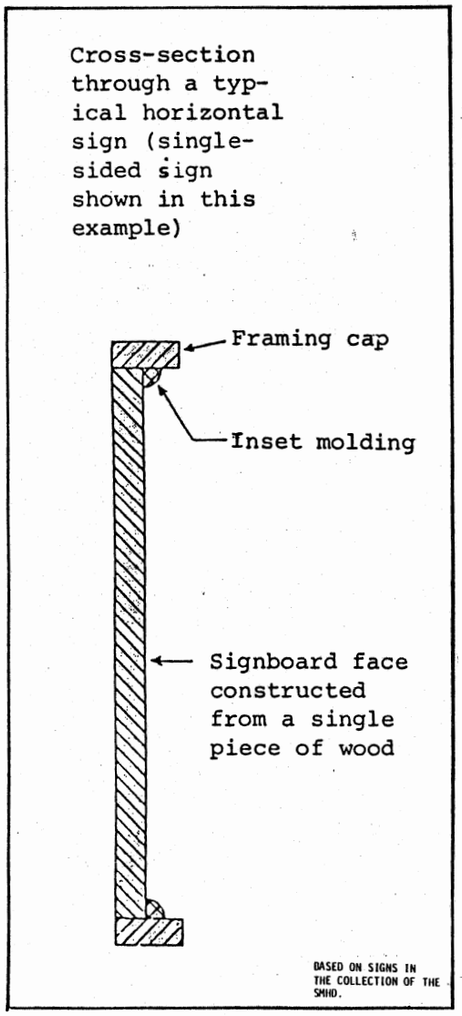
To be truly authentic, modern-use commercial signs must be fabricated using period construction techniques. The following section outlines historically correct methods for choosing materials for a sign, selecting an appropriate signboard frame, using correct support hardware and properly connecting the sign to the building facade.

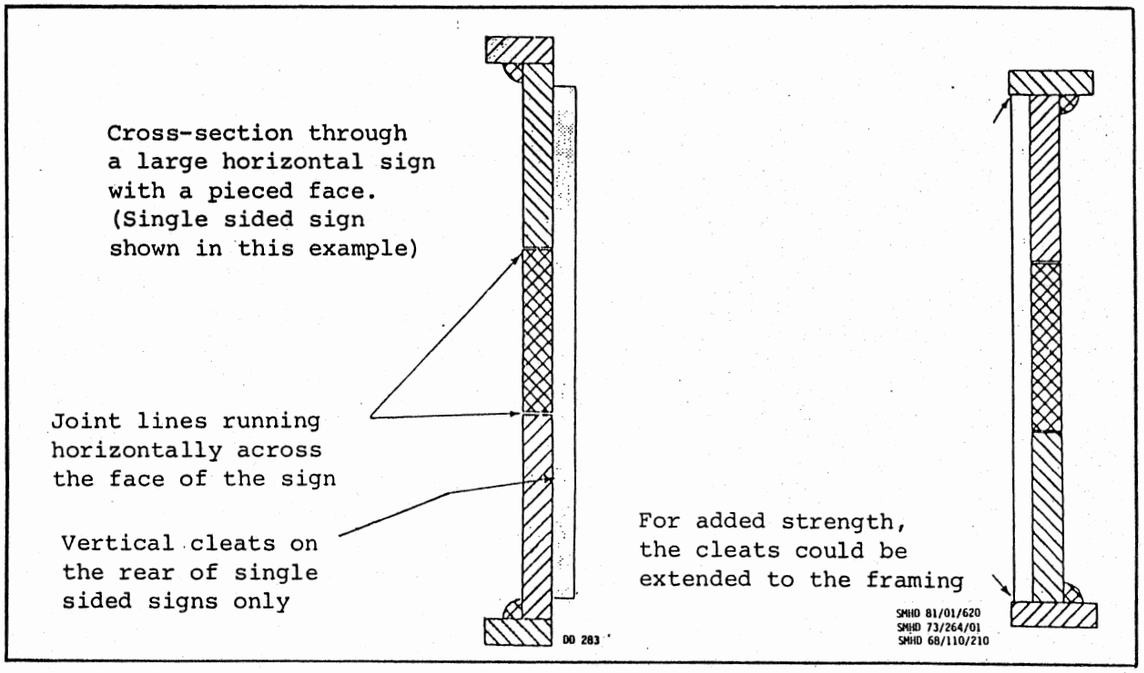
A. MATERIALS

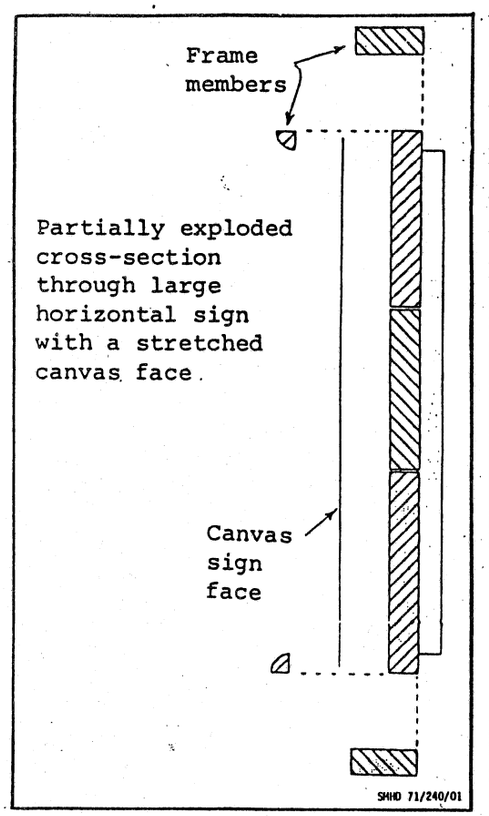
Except where explicitly indicated in the Guidelines text, all signs should be constructed entirely of wood. All exposed wood surfaces should be smoothly finished.

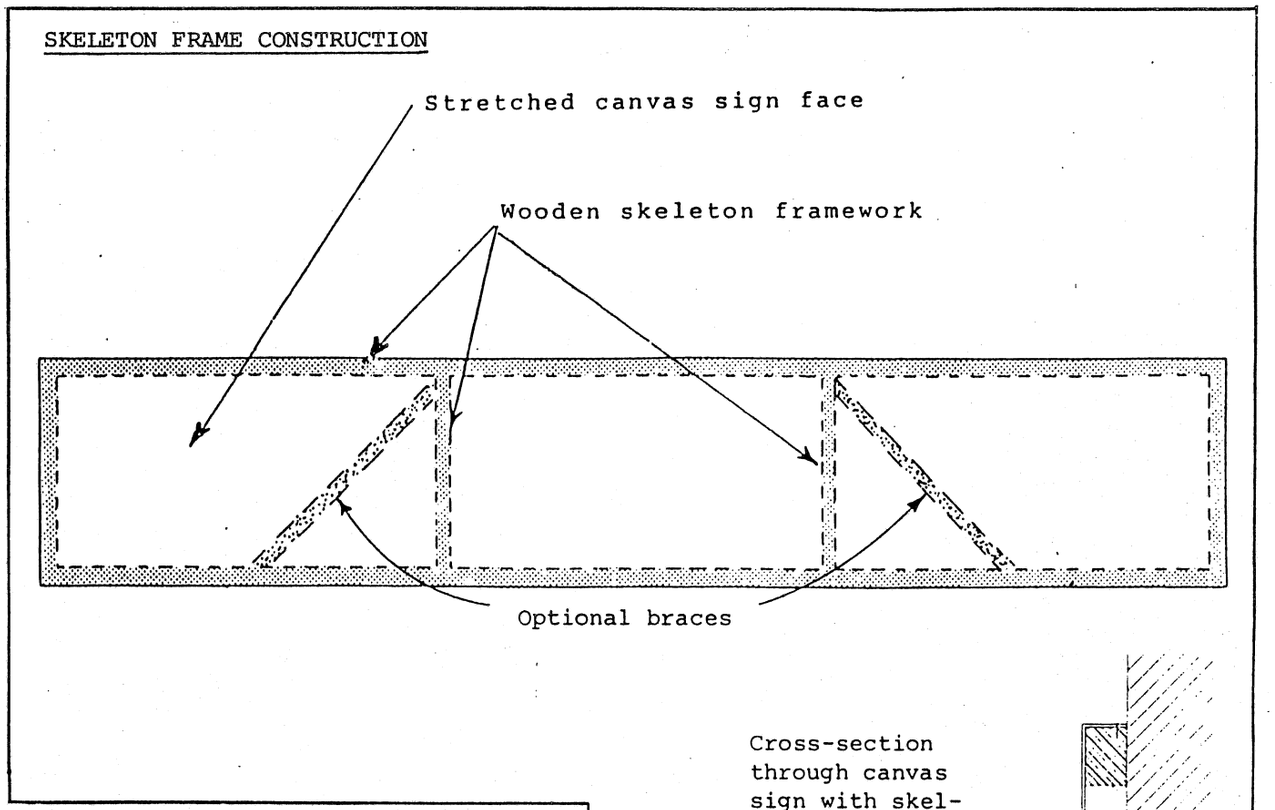
1. Historically, most signfaces were constructed out of a single plank of wood - ½ to 1 inch thick.

2. Large, horizontal signboards were sometimes pieced together with several planks of wood (one on top of the other). This often resulted in subtle horizontal lines running through the face of the sign. Vertical cleats were commonly used as supports on the rear of these single sided signs. Sometimes a piece of cloth (canvas) was stretched over the face of a sign to eliminate the lines. Signs were then painted on the cloth surface.


Cross-section through a typical horizontal sign (single-sided sign shown in this example)
Framing cap
Inset molding
Signboard face constructed from a single piece of wood
BASED ON SIGNS IN THE COLLECTION OF THE SMHD.


Cross-section through a large horizontal sign with a pieced face. (Single sided sign shown in this example)
Joint lines running horizontally across the face of the sign
Vertical cleats on the rear of single sided signs only
DD 283
For added strength, the cleats could be extended to the framing
SMHD 81/01/620
SMHD 73/264/01
SMHD 68/110/210

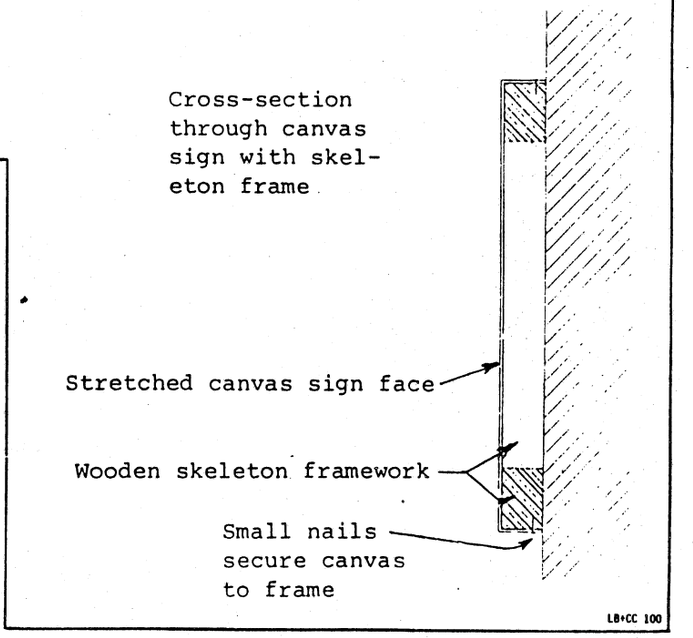

Frame members
Partially exploded cross-section through large horizontal sign with a stretched canvas face.
Canvas sign face
SHHD 71/240/01



3. On extremely rare occasions, a piece of sheet metal was used for the face of a conventionally framed sign.

4. Plywood was unknown during the historic period. If plywood is to be utilized, the edges should be capped and sealed. Any telltale "modularization" created on large signs using plywood sheets should be avoided.

5. Extremely large signs mounted flat against a wall (usually occurring above the first floor line) were sometimes constructed with a wooden skeleton framework with a stretched canvas face. This technique was also used for sign type 5a explained on page 136. See illustration.


Cross-section through canvas sign with skeleton frame
Stretched canvas sign face
Wooden skeleton framework
Small nails secure canvas to frame
LB+CC 100

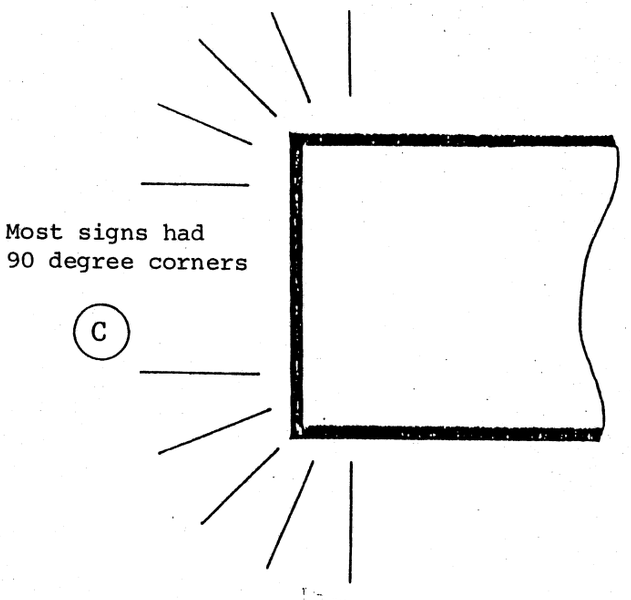
B. FRAMING

1. During the interpretive period, a majority of signs were framed. An exception to this generalization is the wall-mounted class of signs.

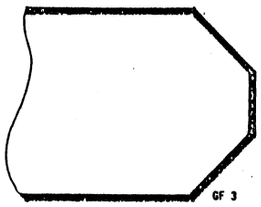
2. Frame size was not totally controlled by the scale of a sign. Sign frames were narrow in width and delicate in appearance even for the largest of signs. In most instances, the use of 2" x 4" framing stock is out of scale and inappropriate.

3. Framed sign corner shapes.

   (a) The corners of most large framed signs were square (90 degrees). There are, however, historic examples of signs with 45 degree framed angle corners. Other sign frame corner designs, such as those composed of curves and arcs, were extremely rare for large signs.

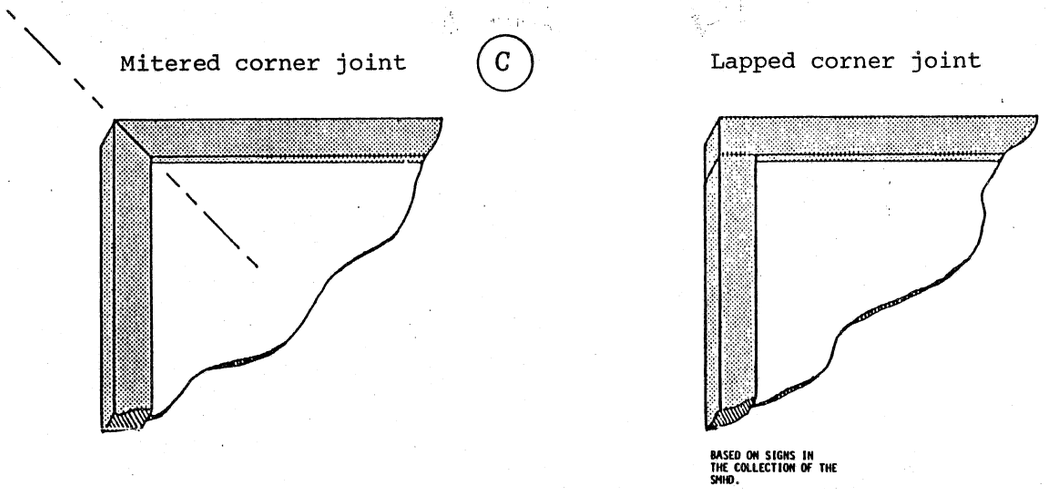


(b) Small and medium-sized wall-mounted signs might have a thin frame applied to the sign-board edge, if the sign had a square top, a top with 45 degree corners or a top design composed of shallow curves.



45 degree corners were less common

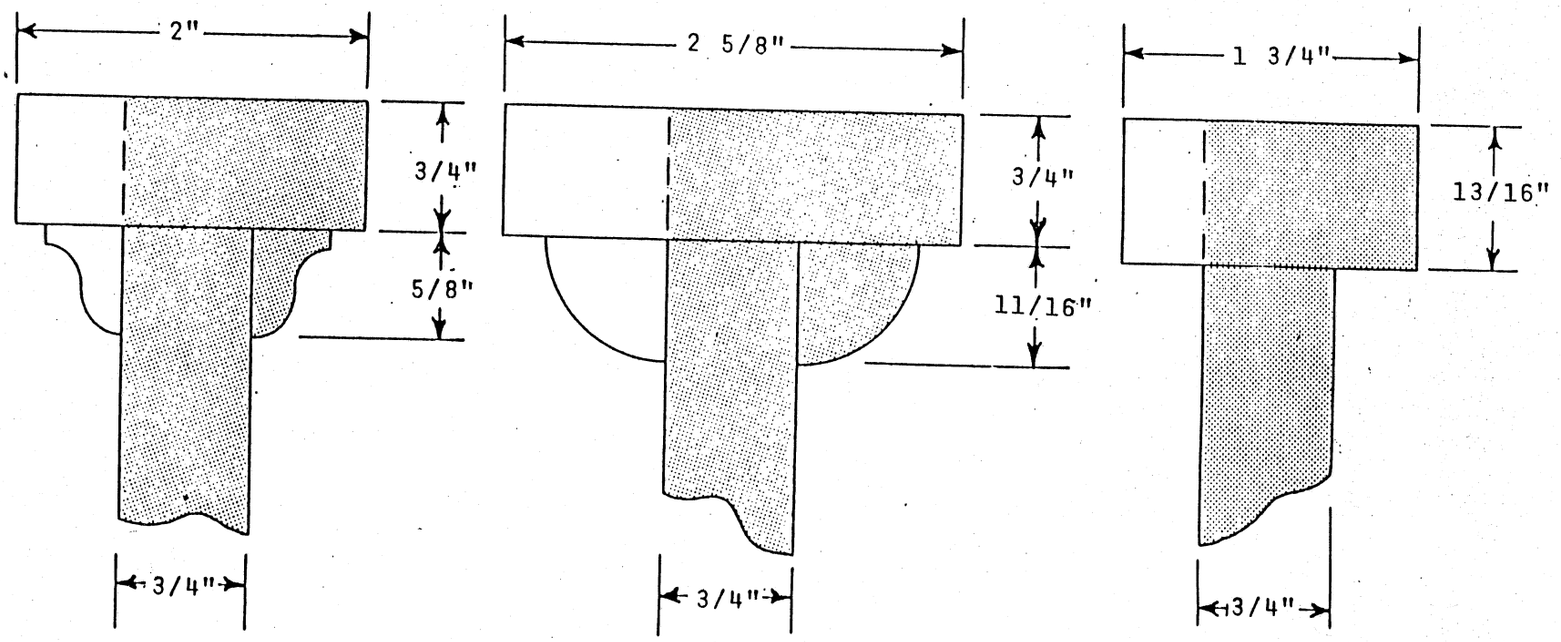
4. Corner joints on framed signs were more commonly mitered rather than lapped.



5. Frame designs were rarely ornate. Frames were most often composed of a simple projecting edge cap, sometimes with the addition of an inset trim molding. The sign frame sections illustrated on the following page are shown full size.

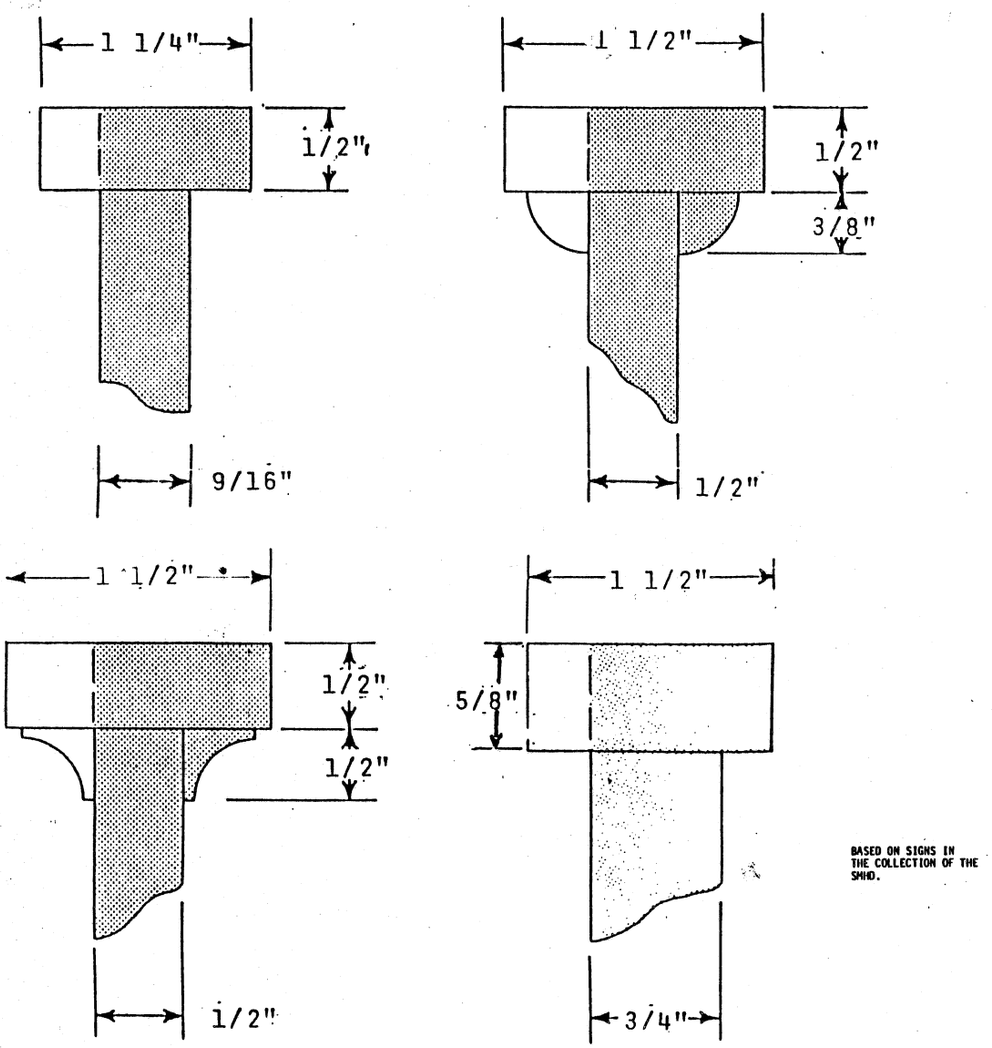
TYPICAL SIGN FRAME SECTIONS FOR SIGNS 6 TO 10 FEET IN LENGTH OR WIDTH

= Frame design for single sided signs



Sections are drawn to full scale

TYPICAL SIGN FRAME SECTIONS FOR SIGNS 2 TO 7 FEET IN LENGTH OR WIDTH



Sections are drawn in full scale

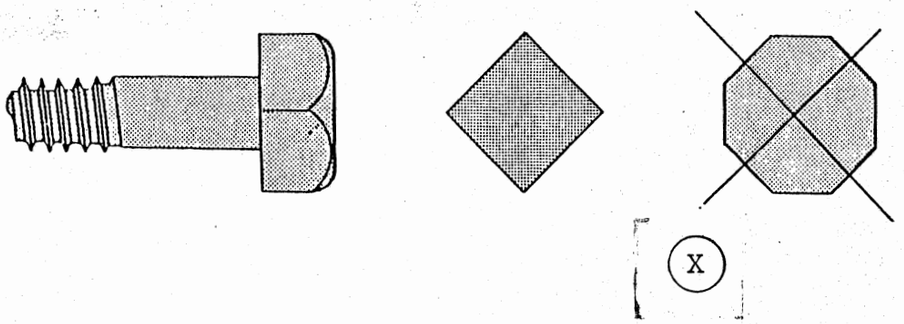
BASED ON SIGNS IN THE COLLECTION OF THE SMHD.

C. HARDWARE

1. During the Old Sacramento historic interpretive period, sign mounting hardware was totally functional. Little attempt was made at ornamentation of metal sign hangers or hardware. Metal straps or rods were the most common means of attaching a sign to a building. See section VI. D. entitled CONNECTIONS for further information.

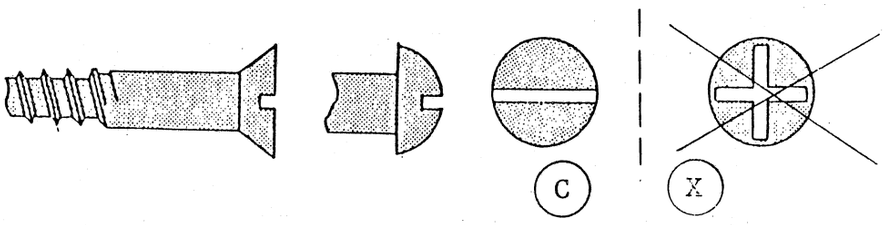
2. All exposed bolt heads and nuts were square, not octangonal.

Square head bolts



Square nuts

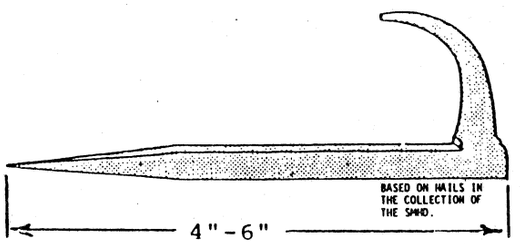
3. Historically, screw heads were always slotted; Phillips head screws are not historically accurate nor acceptable. Specialized "security" screw heads, however, may be used for sign installations within 8 feet of the sidewalk or adjacent ground surface.



Slotted head screws

4. Special sign installation nails may be utilized to attach some wall-mounted signs to masonry surfaces.

Special sign installation nails



5. All exposed nails should have "square nail" characteristics including rectangular heads and shanks.

6. The number of holes drilled into historic masonry walls such as brick and granite surfaces, should be minimized. Whenever possible, anchorage should be made within mortar joints which can more easily be repaired once the sign has been removed.

D. CONNECTIONS

Every effort should be made to replicate historically accurate sign connection hardware.

For public safety, however, all signs shall comply with the appropriate detailed provisions of the Sacramento City Building Code relating to design, structural members and connections. Signs must also comply with the additional construction standards stated below.

1. All suspended signs must either be supported by direct connection with a building or canopy structure or indirectly by metal straps. Chain will not be allowed. (Historically, chain was not extensively used for sign connections.) Metal supports or braces should be at least one eighth of an inch thick. All metal wire cable, supports and braces and all bolts used to attach signs to brackets and signs to supporting building or structure should be galvanized or an equal material.

   (a) Signs should be anchored to prevent any lateral movement that would cause wear on supporting members or connections. No sign shall be suspended by chain or other devices that would allow the sign to swing due to wind action.

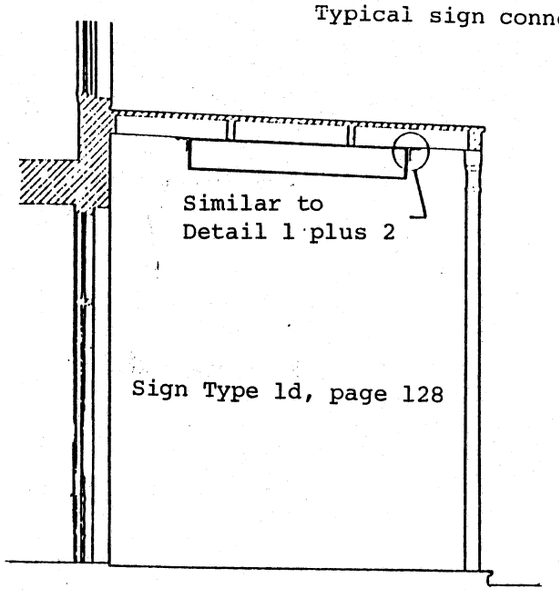
   (b) All signs, except those attached flat against the wall of a building, shall be constructed to withstand wind loads of 20 pounds per square foot on the face of the sign.

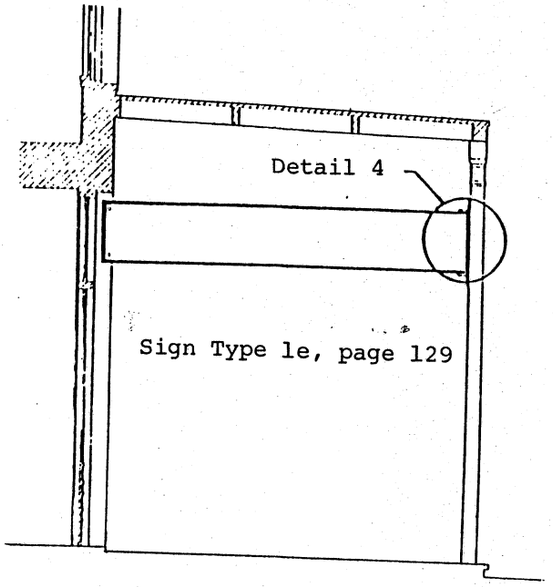
2. All signs which project out over a public right-of-way, including all installations over sidewalks, must be placed a minimum of eight feet above the adjacent walkway or ground surface.

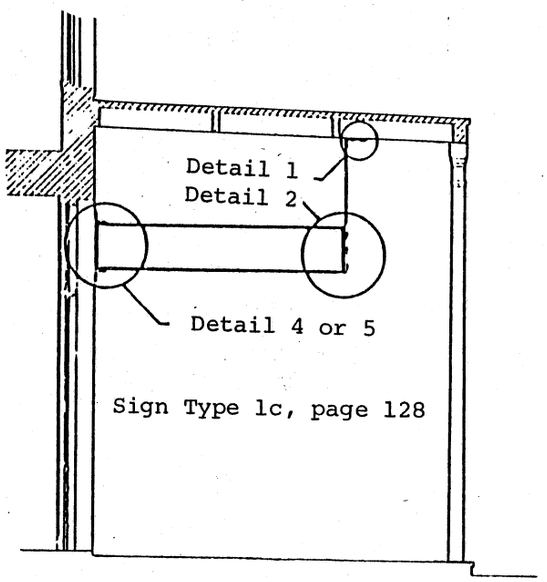
3. All detached sign structures on poles shall be self-supporting structures erected on and permanently attached to concrete foundations. Such structures or poles shall be fabricated from materials as may be approved by the Director of Buildings Inspections.

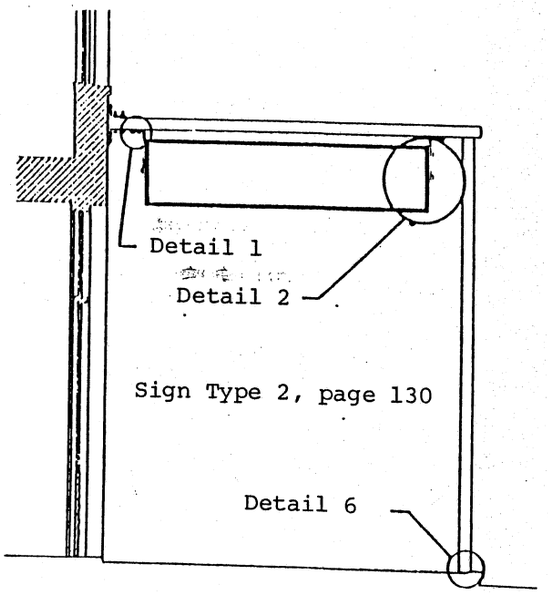
4. On the following pages, are shown general arrangements for typical sign-to-building connections that will meet the historic criteria of the District. Larger scale drawings of the connections are shown starting on page 207. These are not the only methods which may be used to connect signs to a building's facade. However, the suitability of other techniques will be judged on a case by case basis.

Typical sign connection hardare installations.

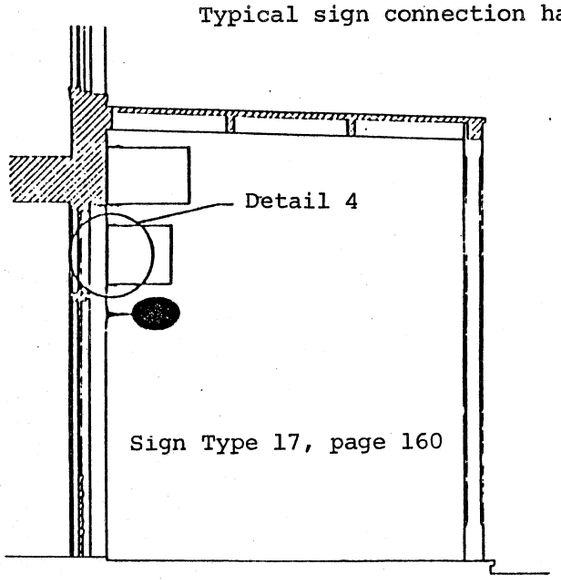


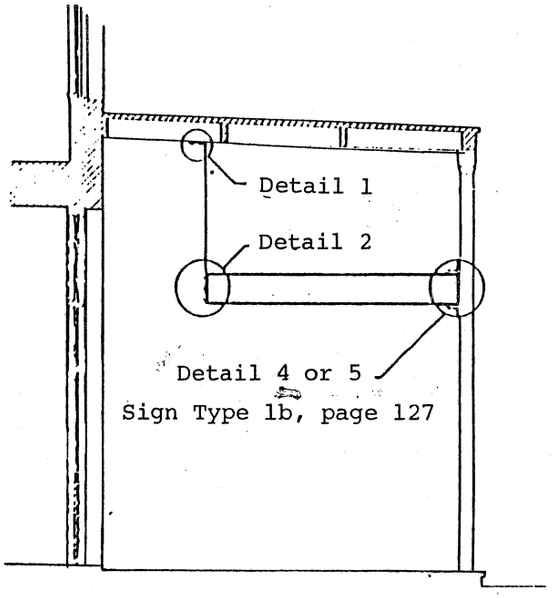


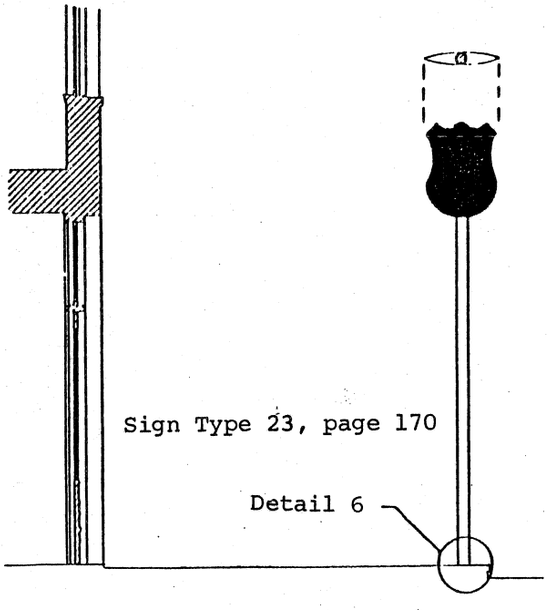


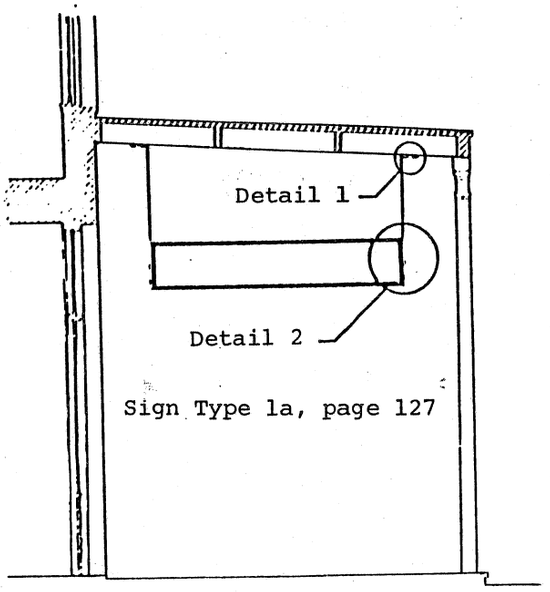


Typical sign connection hardware installations

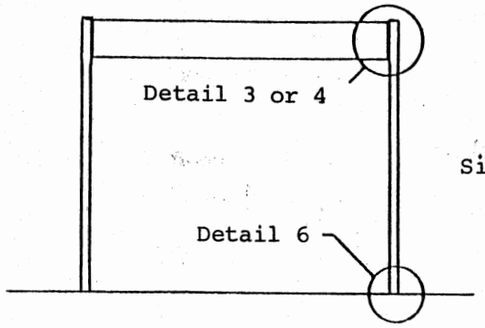




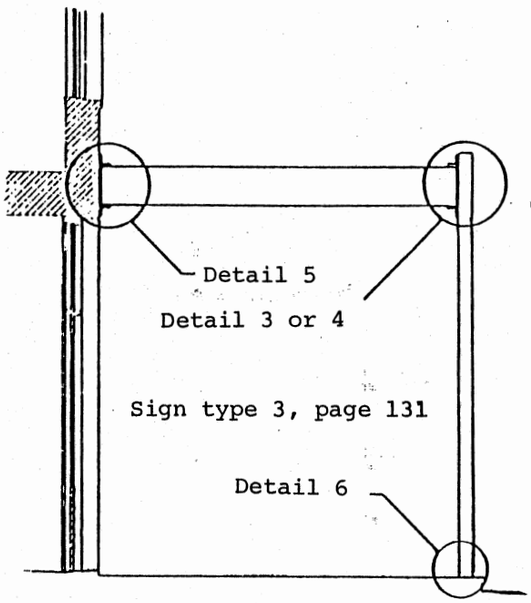




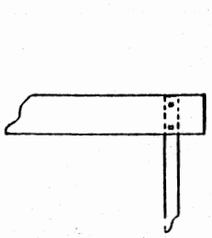
Typical sign connection hardware installations.



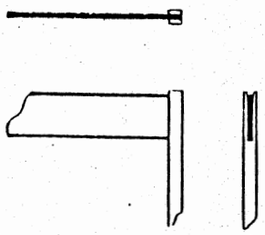
Sign type 4, page 135



Sign type 3, page 131

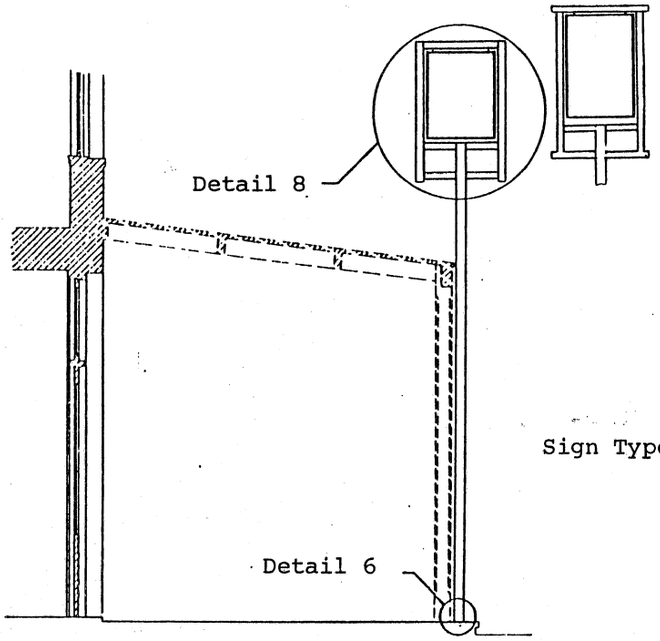


Sign bolted to side of post

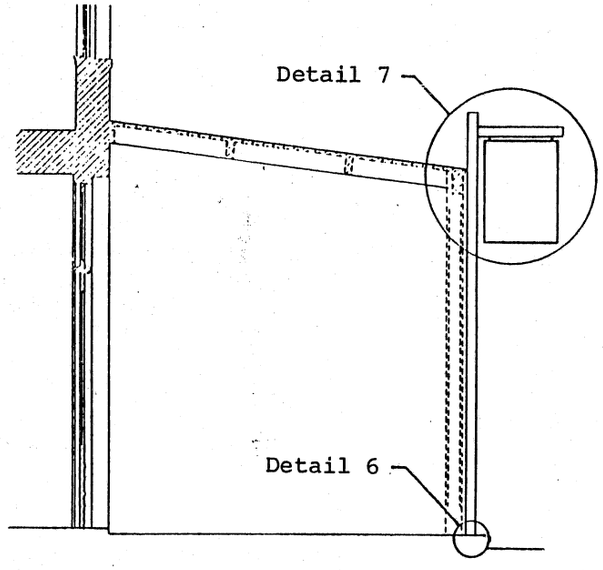


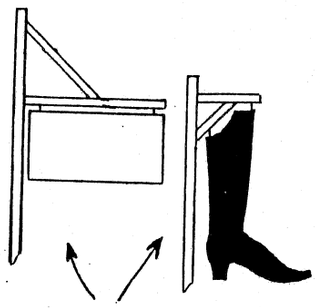
Post slotted to receive sign; sign is nailed through post from both sides.

Typical sign connection hardware installations.



Sign Type 23b, page 173

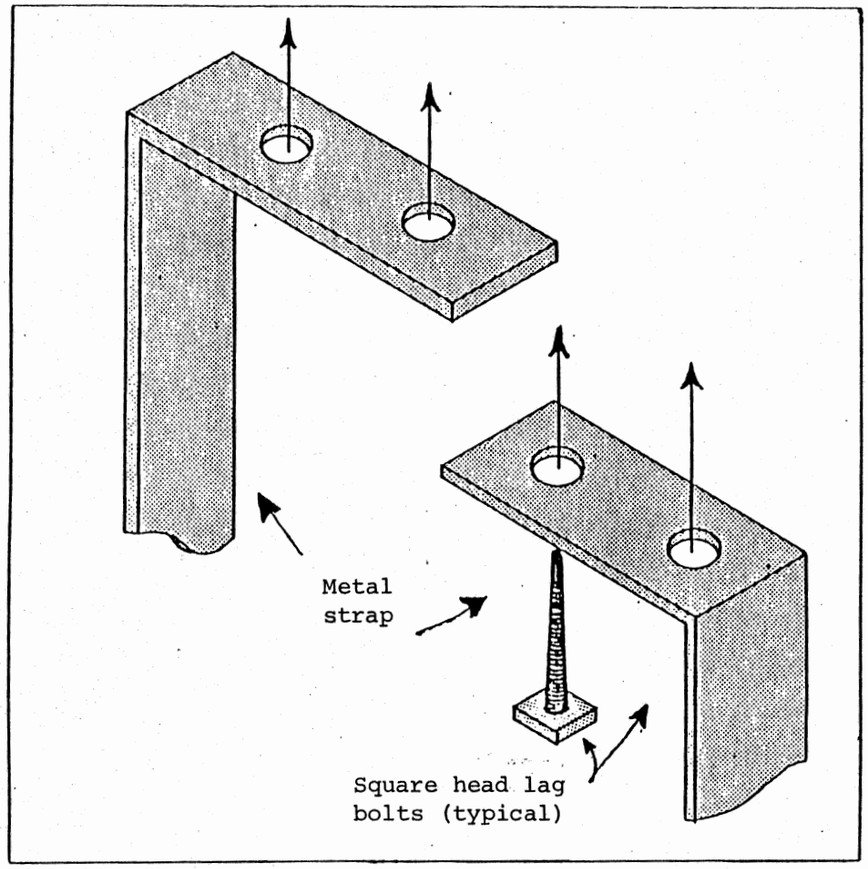




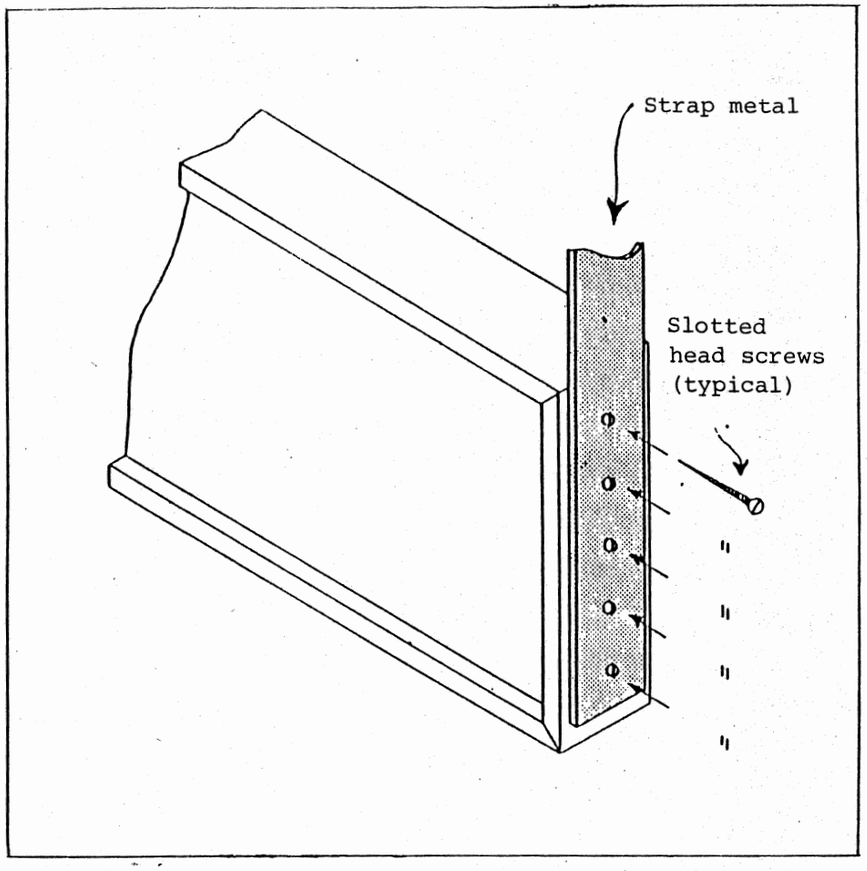
Similar to Detail 7 but with the addition of a brace attached either above or below the horizontal cross member

Sign Type 23b, page 174

Construction connection details

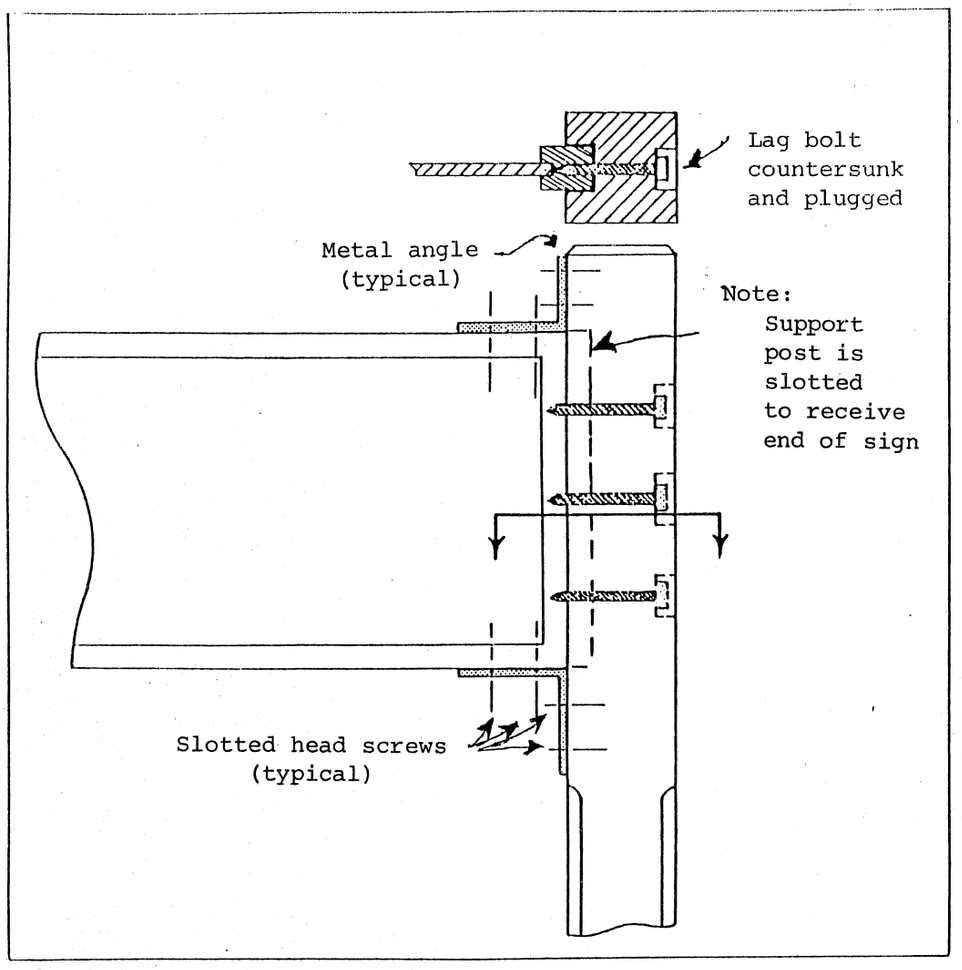


Detail 1

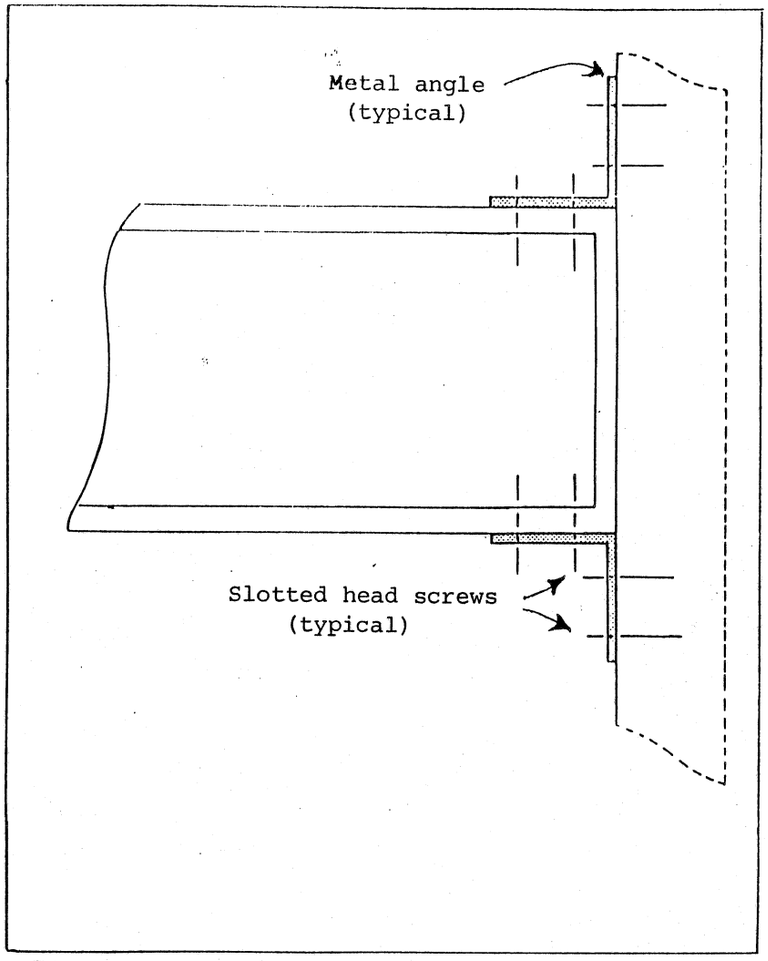


Detail 2

The City of Sacramento takes no responsibility for installation techniques. These details are shown only for general arrangement of typical details which will meet the historic criteria of the District. Generally, dimensions are not given in these details as it is the responsibility of the sign installer to calculate safe values for construction members.

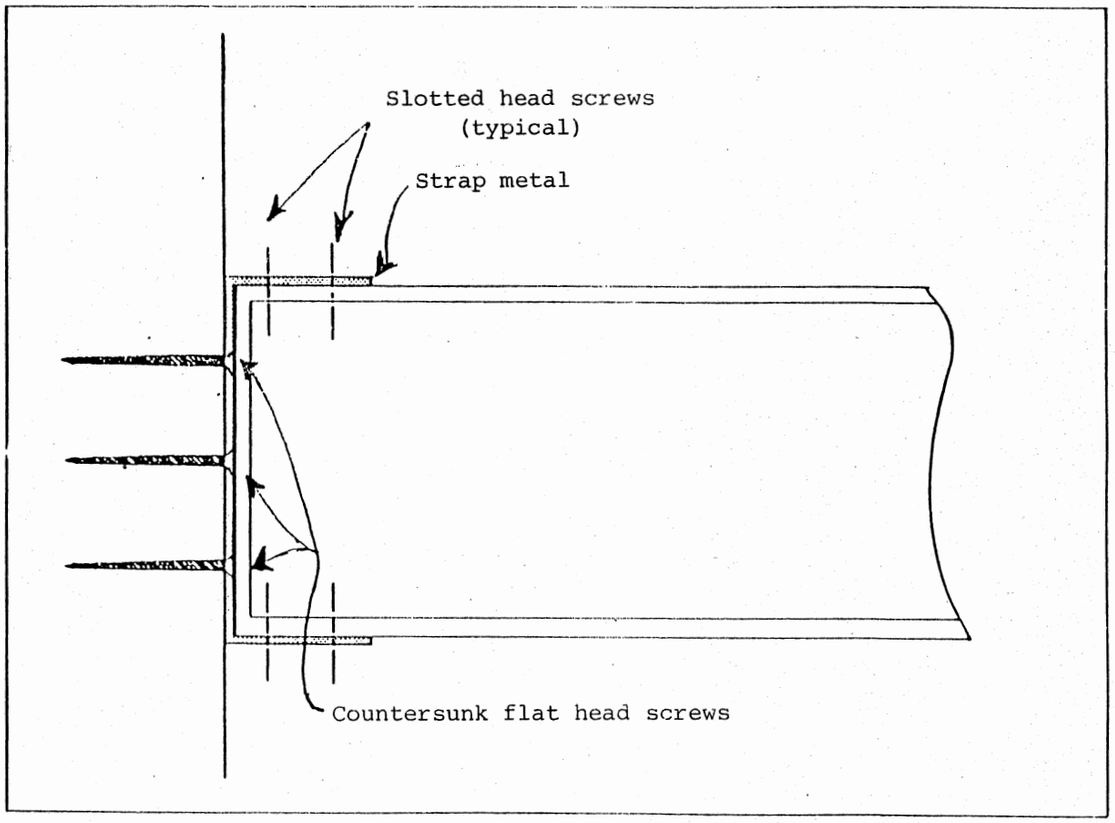


Detail 3



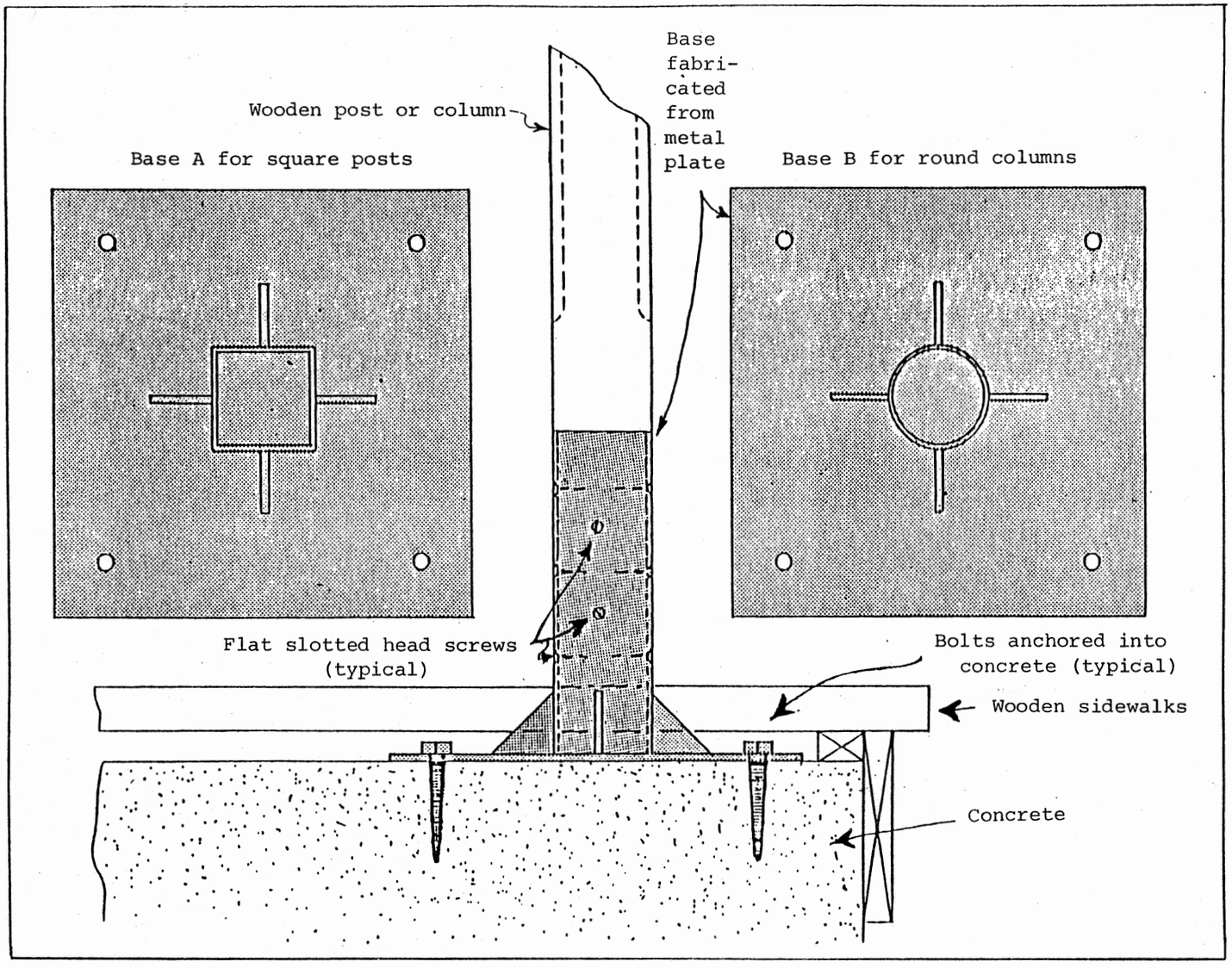
Detail 4

The City of Sacramento takes no responsibility for installation techniques. These details are shown only for general arrangement of typical details which will meet the historic criteria of the District. Generally, dimensions are not given in these details as it is the responsibility of the sign installer to calculate safe values for construction members.

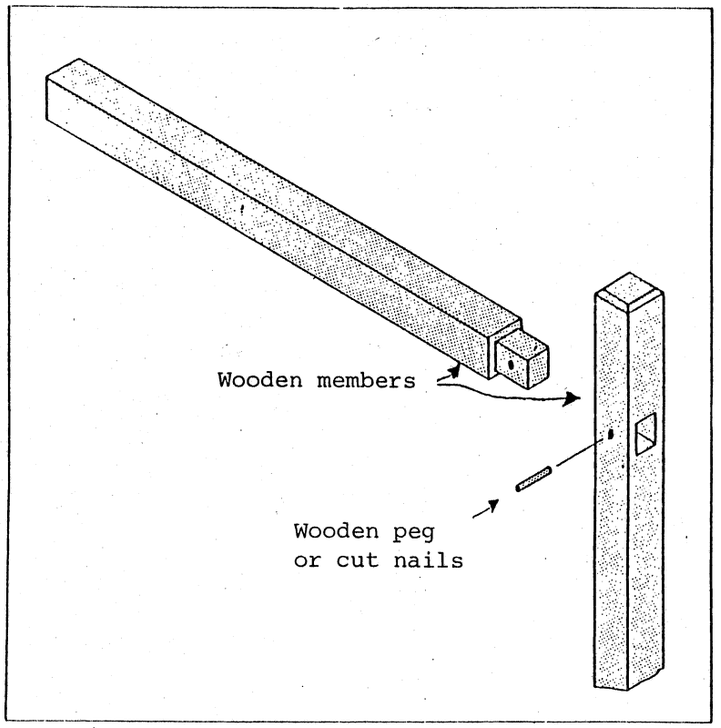


Detail 5

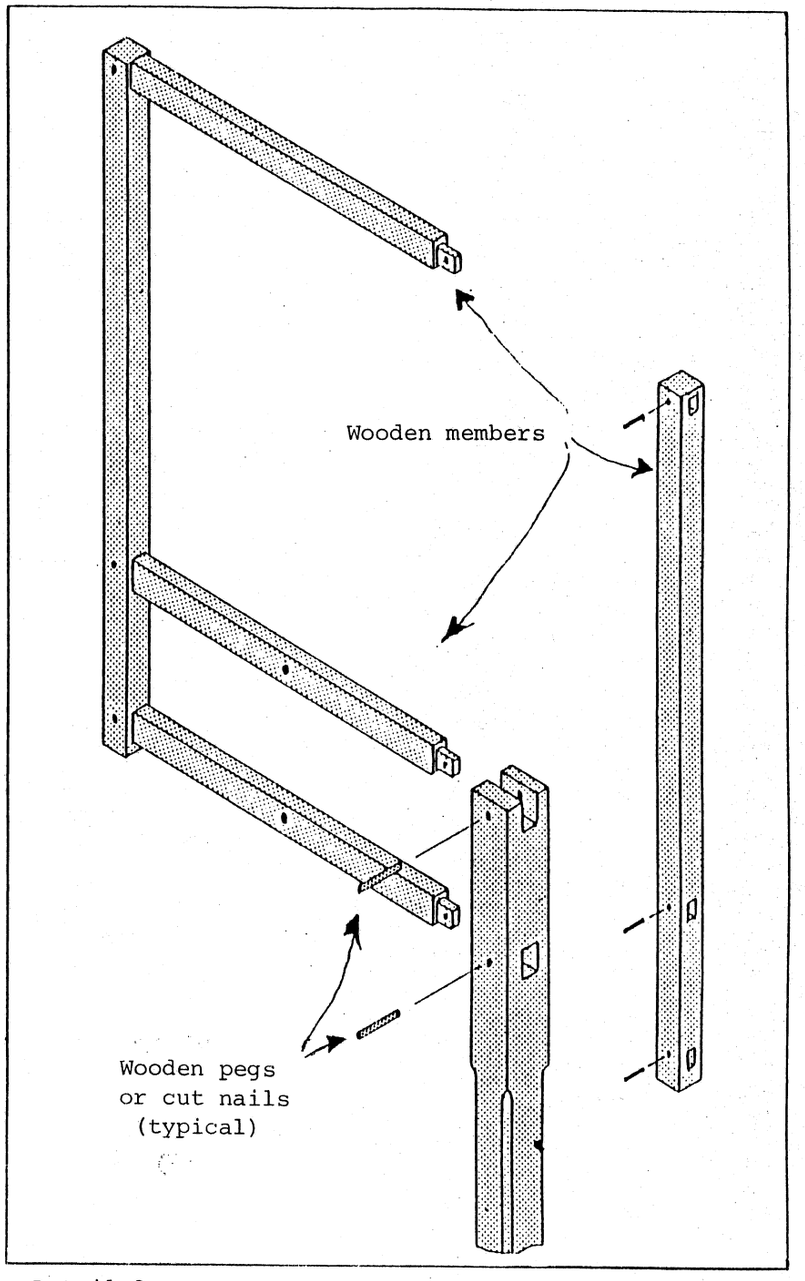
THE CITY OF SACRAMENTO TAKES NO RESPONSIBILITY FOR INSTALLATION TECHNIQUES. THESE DETAILS ARE SHOWN FOR GENERAL ARRANGEMENT OF TYPICAL DETAILS WHICH WILL MEET THE HISTORIC CRITERIA OF THE DISTRICT. GENERALLY, DIMENSIONS ARE NOT GIVEN IN THESE DETAILS AS IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE SIGN INSTALLER TO CALCULATE SAFE VALUES FOR CONTRUCTION MEMBERS.


Base fabri-cated from metal plate
Wooden post or column
Base A for square posts
Base B for round columns
Flat slotted head screws (typical)
Bolts anchored into concrete (typical)
Wooden sidewalks
Concrete

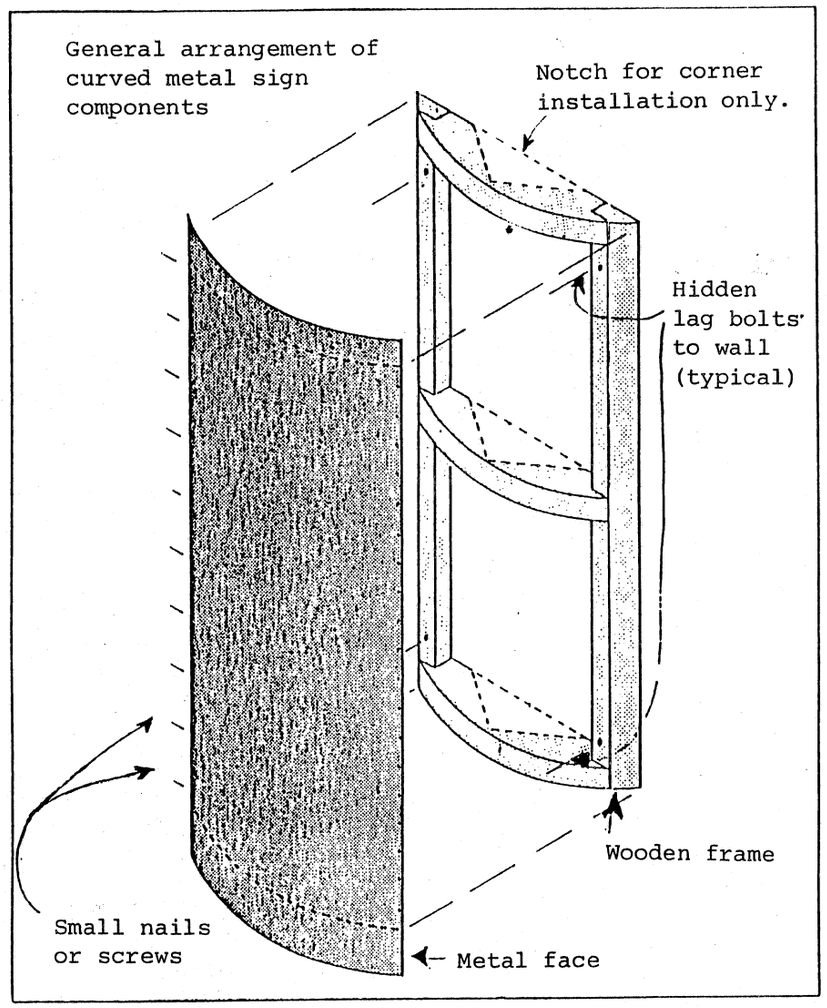
Detail 6



Detail 7



Detail 8


General arrangement of curved metal sign components
Notch for corner installation only.
Hidden lag bolts to wall (typical)
Wooden frame
Small nails or screws
Metal face

Detail 9

VII. SIGN LIGHTING

All signs shall be nonilluminated or indirectly illuminated (except for signs painted on the glass of special gas lamp fixtures designated for use with hotel, saloon, stage offices, and theaters. (See page 294 for examples.)

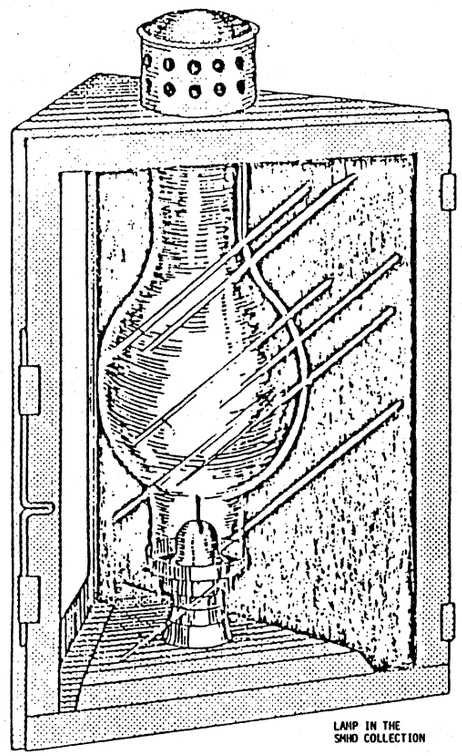
When at all possible, exterior signs should be located to take advantage of general street lighting.

If additional lighting other than existing street lighting is necessary, millhouse lamps can be installed. These light fixtures were commonly used during the historic period for general lighting. The lamps are constructed of sheet metal (historically tin or copper), with one or more glass faces. Originally, oil (whale or lard), camphine (a highly volatile derivative of turpentine) or kerosene burning, they may be converted to electric operation. Every effort should be made to conceal any exterior wiring that may be in public view. Electrical conduit will not be allowed on the exterior of a building. In lieu of this, a low-voltage electric lighting system should be used.

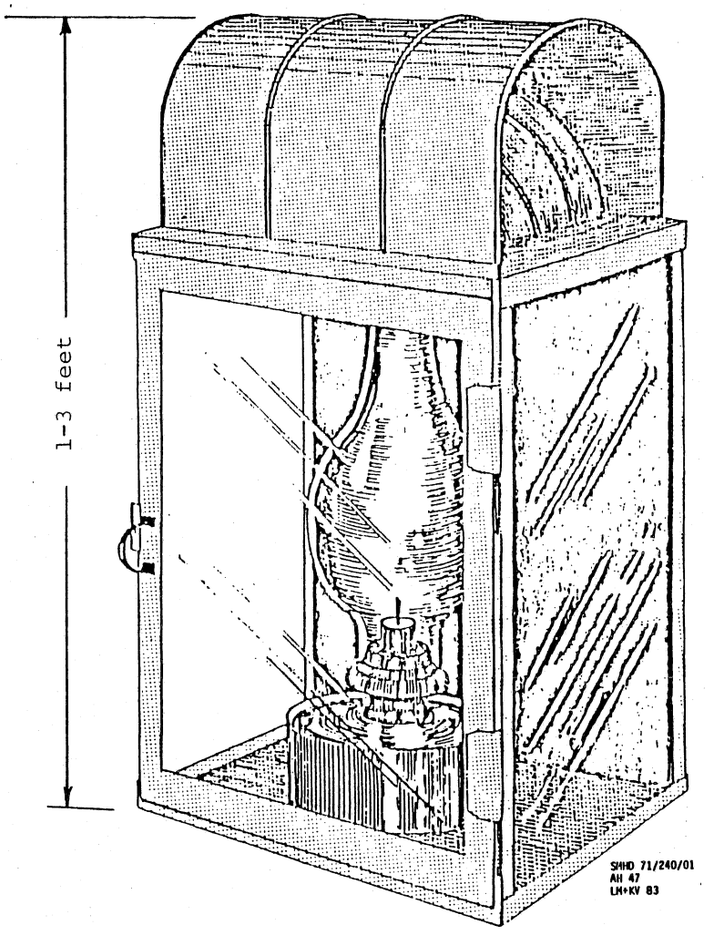
A low-voltage (12 volt) system has advantages over the standared 120 volt system commonly used today. Exterior wiring leading to the lamp may be more easily concealed because it does not require electical conduit. A step-down transformer is required, however, and should be located inside the building.

Typical millhouse lamps are illustrated on the following page. These may be mounted on canopy columns, posts or the face of a building.

Millhouse light enclosures were most commonly constructed of copper or tin, often left natural, aged green or painted black. One, two or three glass panes were used with one panel hinged to allow access to the light source. Rectangular enclosure shapes (in plan) were the most common. Glass should be clear. It is recommeded that kerosene lamps complete with glass shades be converted to electric operation for the light source. A polished metal reflector was sometimes placed behind the light.

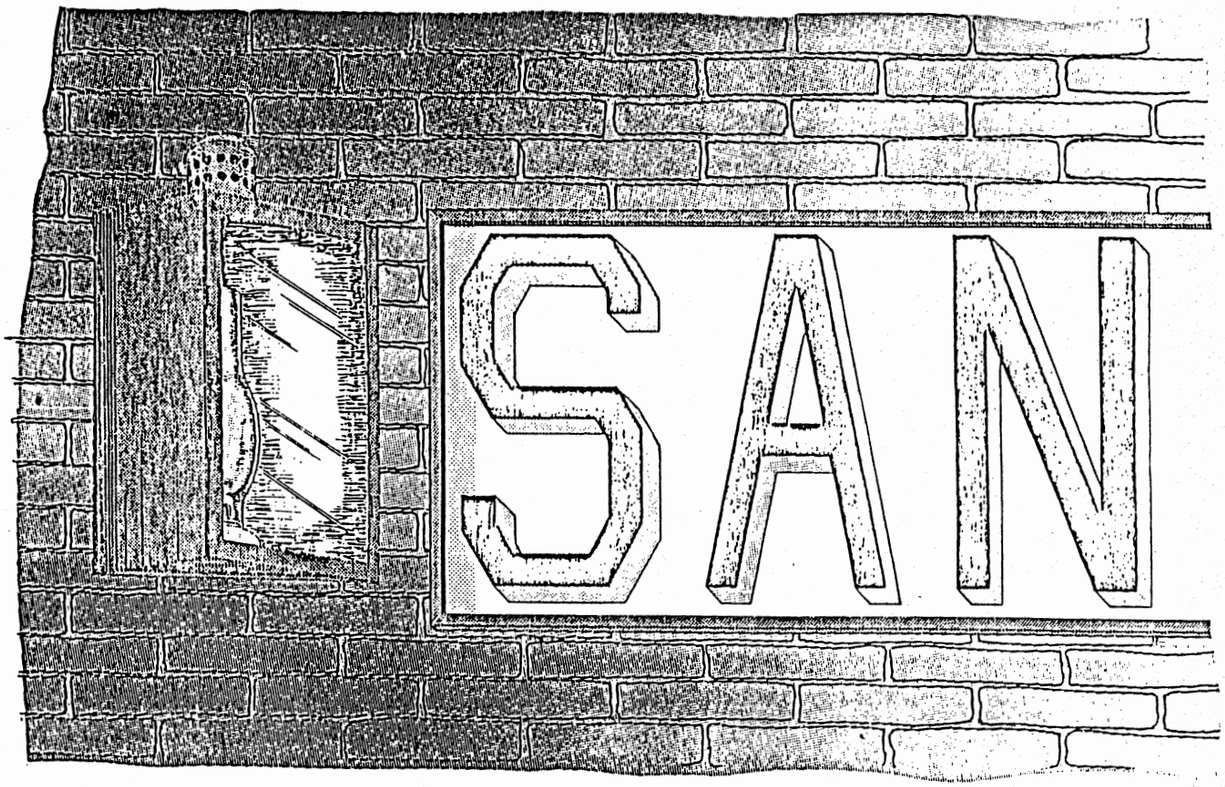


Triangular lamp design

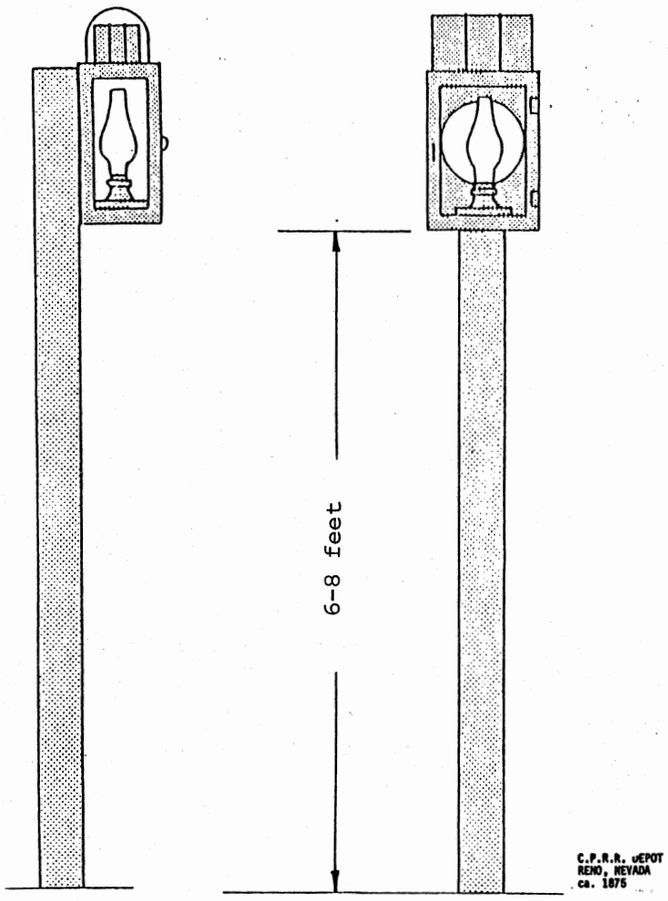


(C) Standard millhouse lamp design.

(R) Triangular lamp design with single glass panel projecting light onto a sign mounted flat against a wall.



Where there are no convenient surfaces to mount the lamp, a free-standing wooden post was sometimes installed to hold the millhouse lamp. These lamps were generally equipped with reflectors. See illustrations.



A millhouse lamp mounted on a free-standing post.

The following is a summary of exterior lighting prohibitions:

- No electrical conduit will be allowed to be exposed in public areas.
- Exposed 120 volt spotlights will not be allowed in public areas.
- Exposed 120 volt spotlights will not be allowed on building exteriors.
- Colored spotlights will not be allowed.
- Strings of "Christmas lights" outlining portions of a building or circling windows are prohibited.
- Flashing signs or flashing illumination are prohibited.
- Neon signs are prohibited.
- Fluorescent lighting is prohibited.

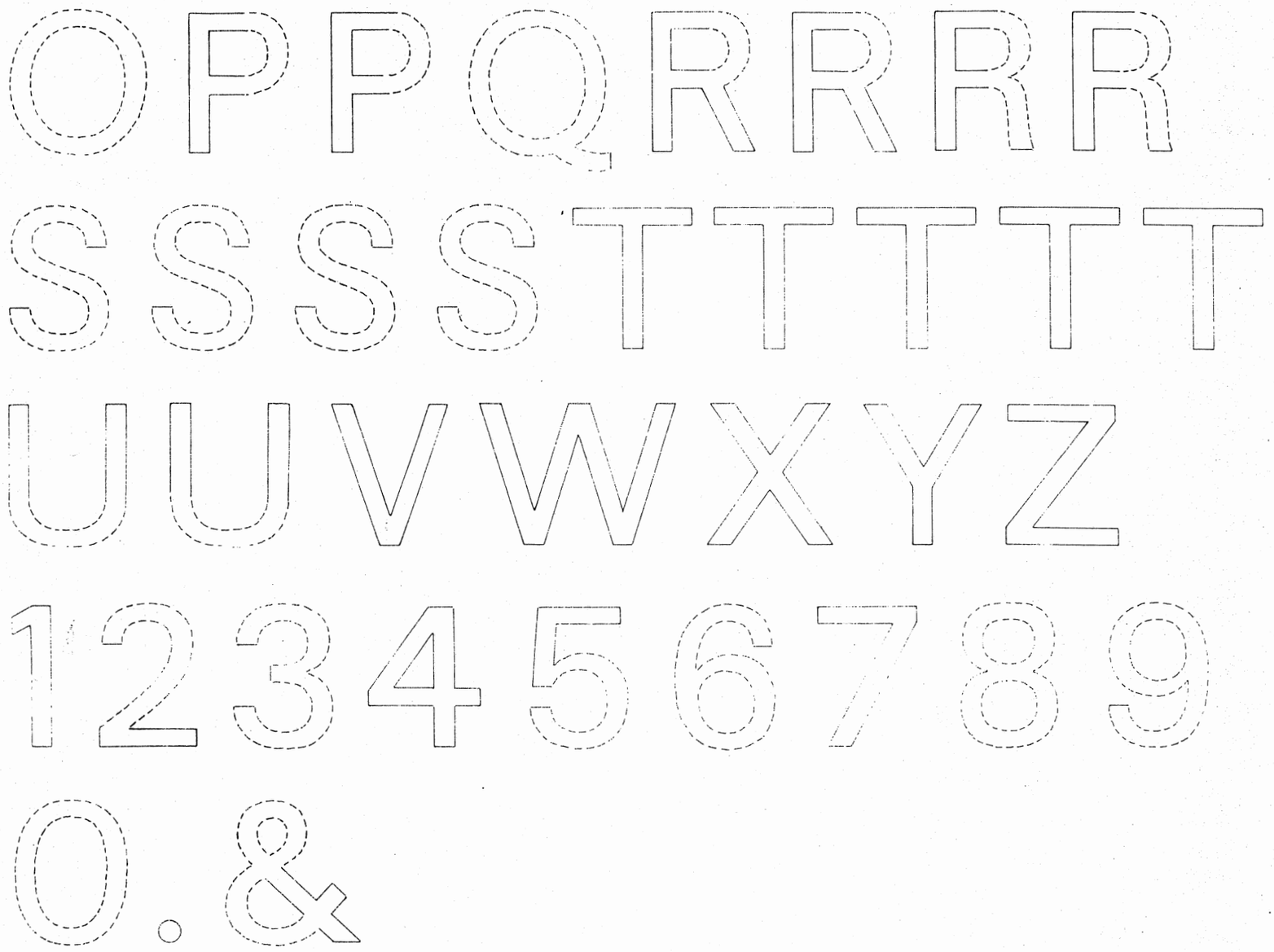
VIII. APPENDICES

A. ALPHABET GUIDES

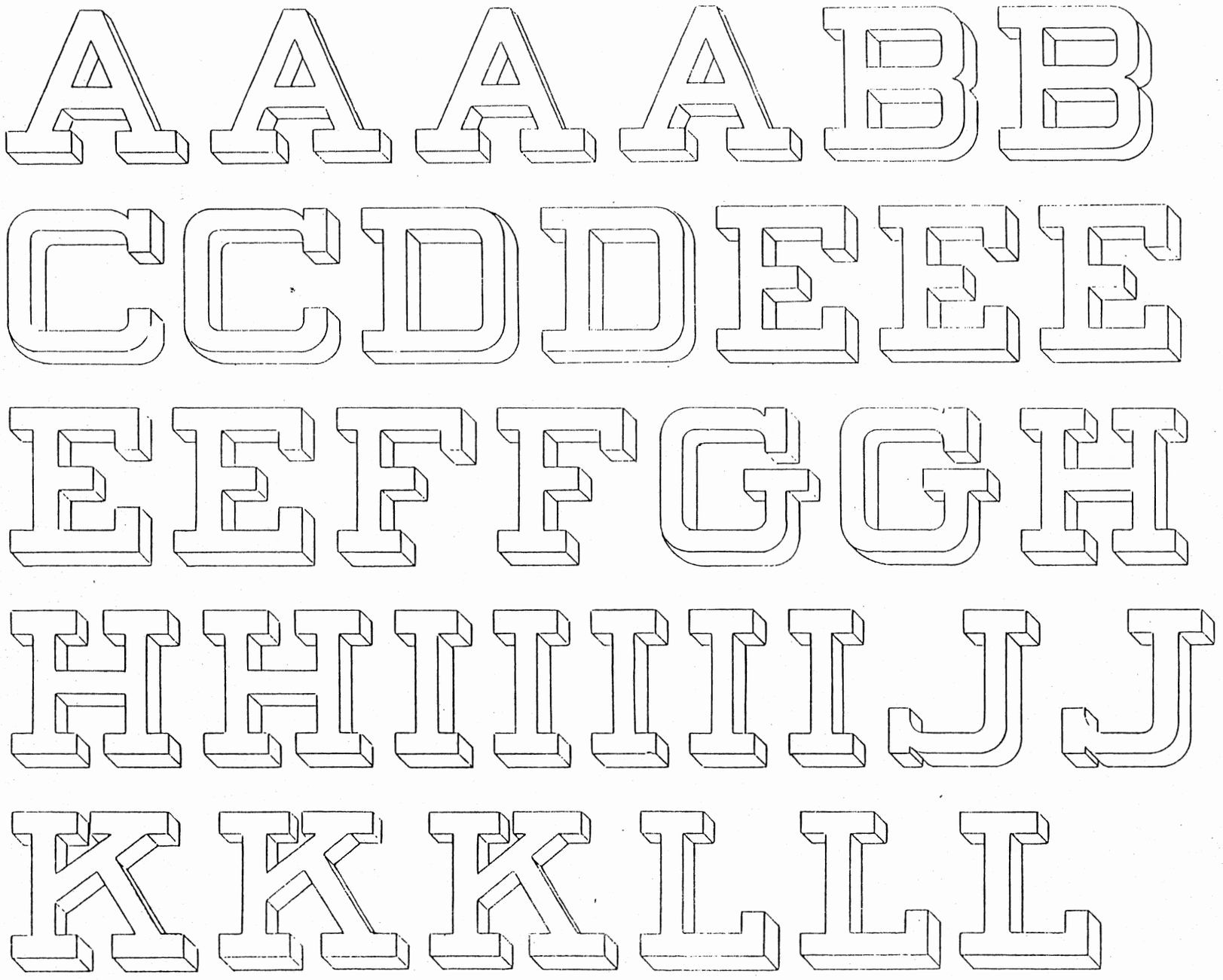
On the following pages will be found letter guides for the alphabets introduced on page 76. Typefaces are presented in an outline form to help facilitate their transference to other mediums. In many cases, rounded elements of the letters are shown dashed. See typeface section under DESIGN COMPONENTS for correct use of these alphabet guides. Lower case and italic alphabets are presented on page 256 and 257.

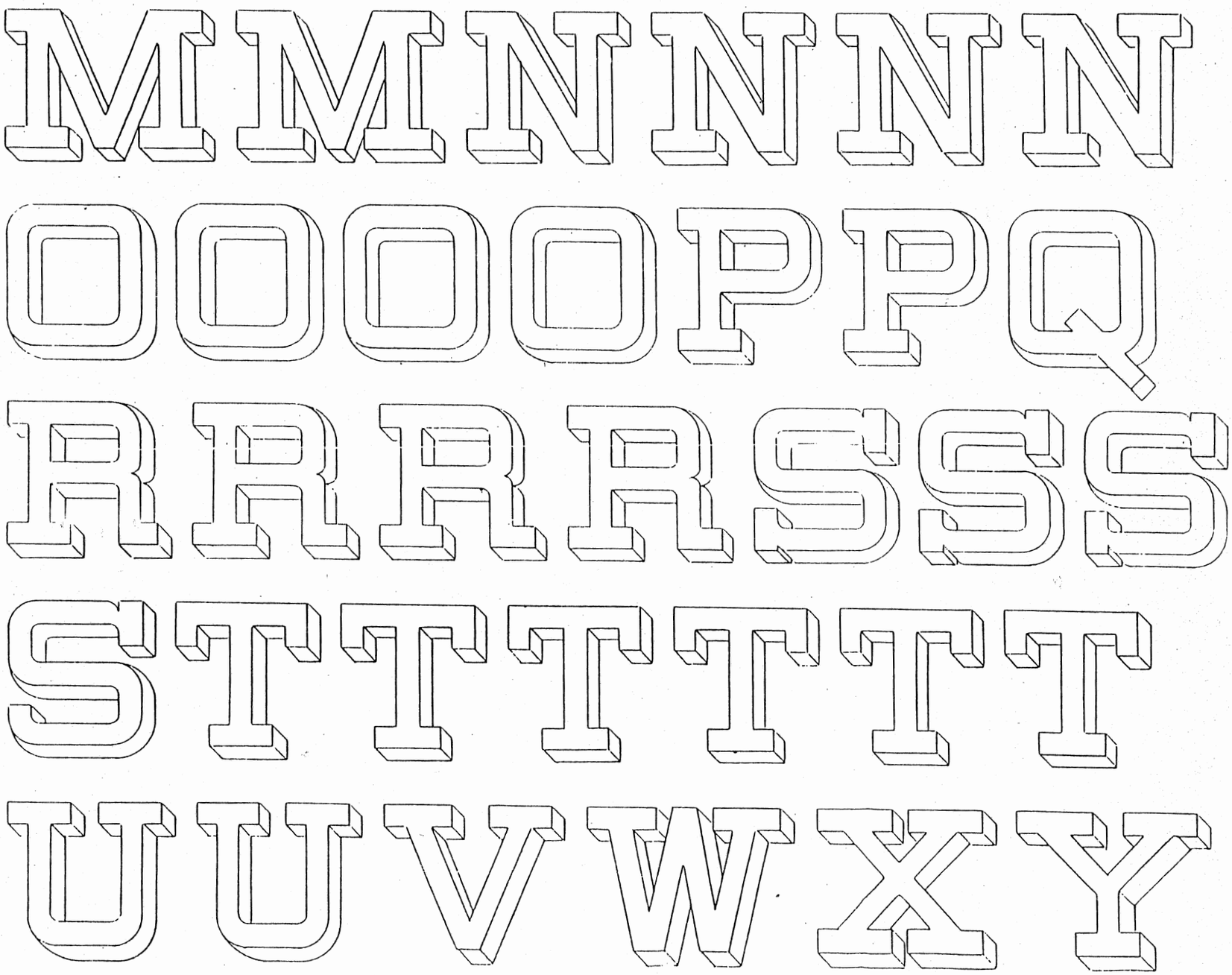
Typeface 1

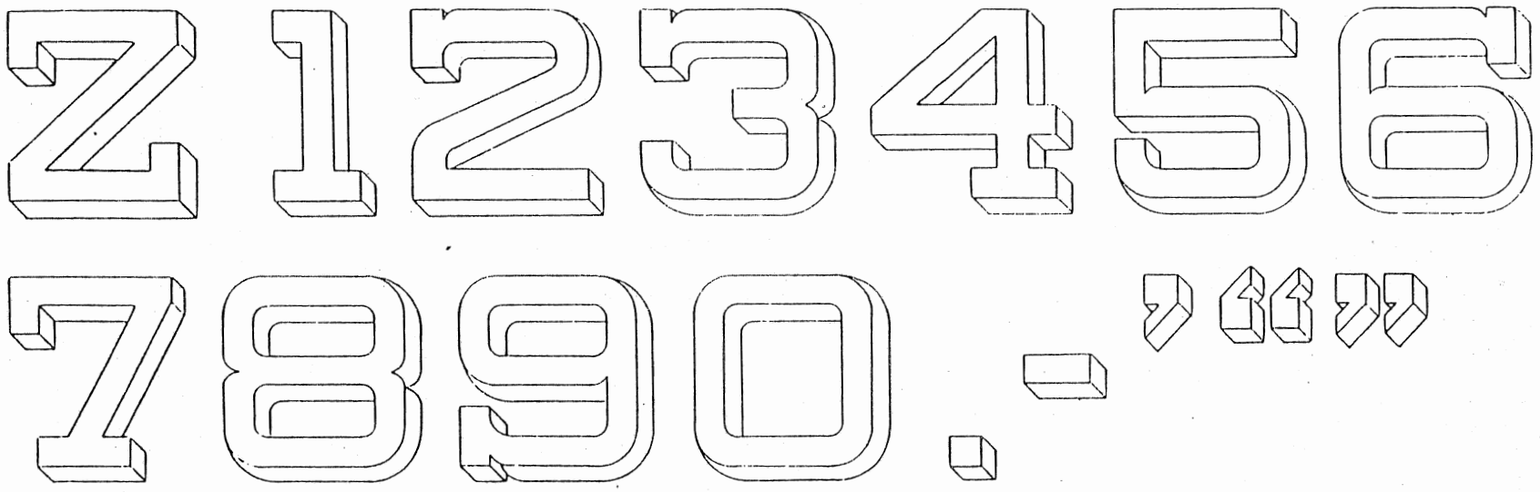
Typeface 2


OPPQRRRR
SSSSTTTTT
UUVWXYZ
123456789
0.&

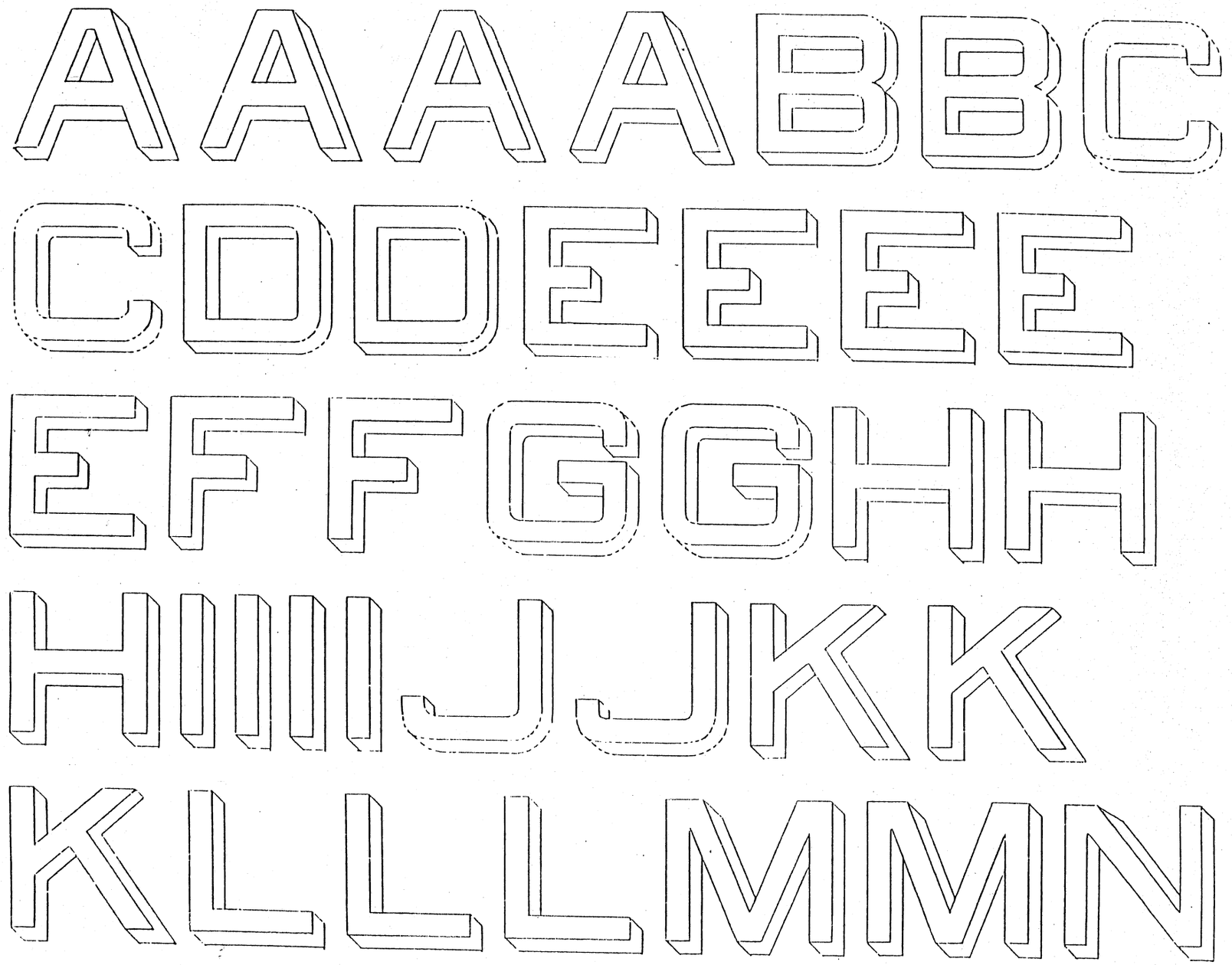
Typeface 3

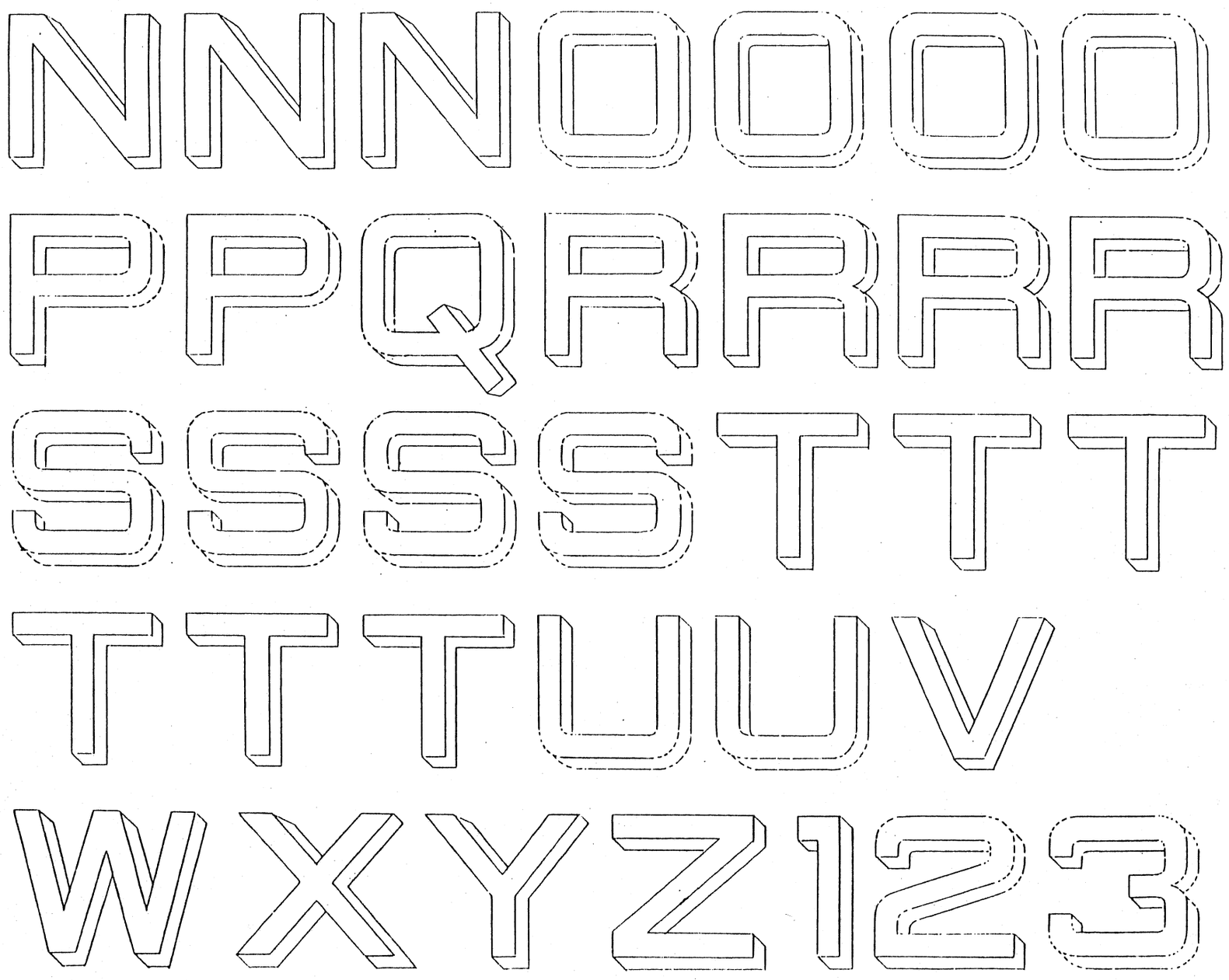


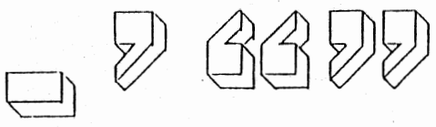

MMNNNN
OOOPPQ
RRRSSS
STTTTT
UUVWXY


Z123456
7890.-'""

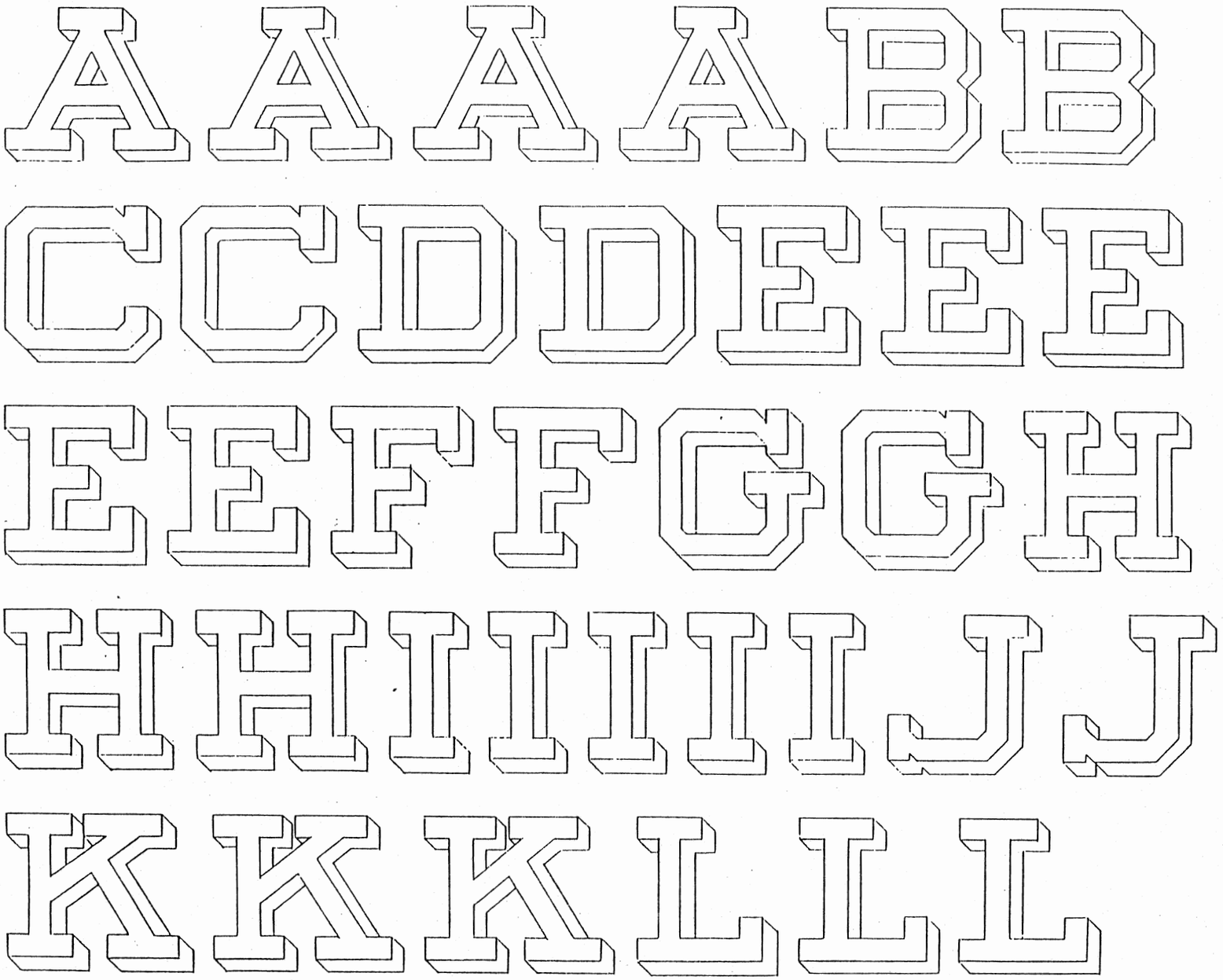
Typeface 4

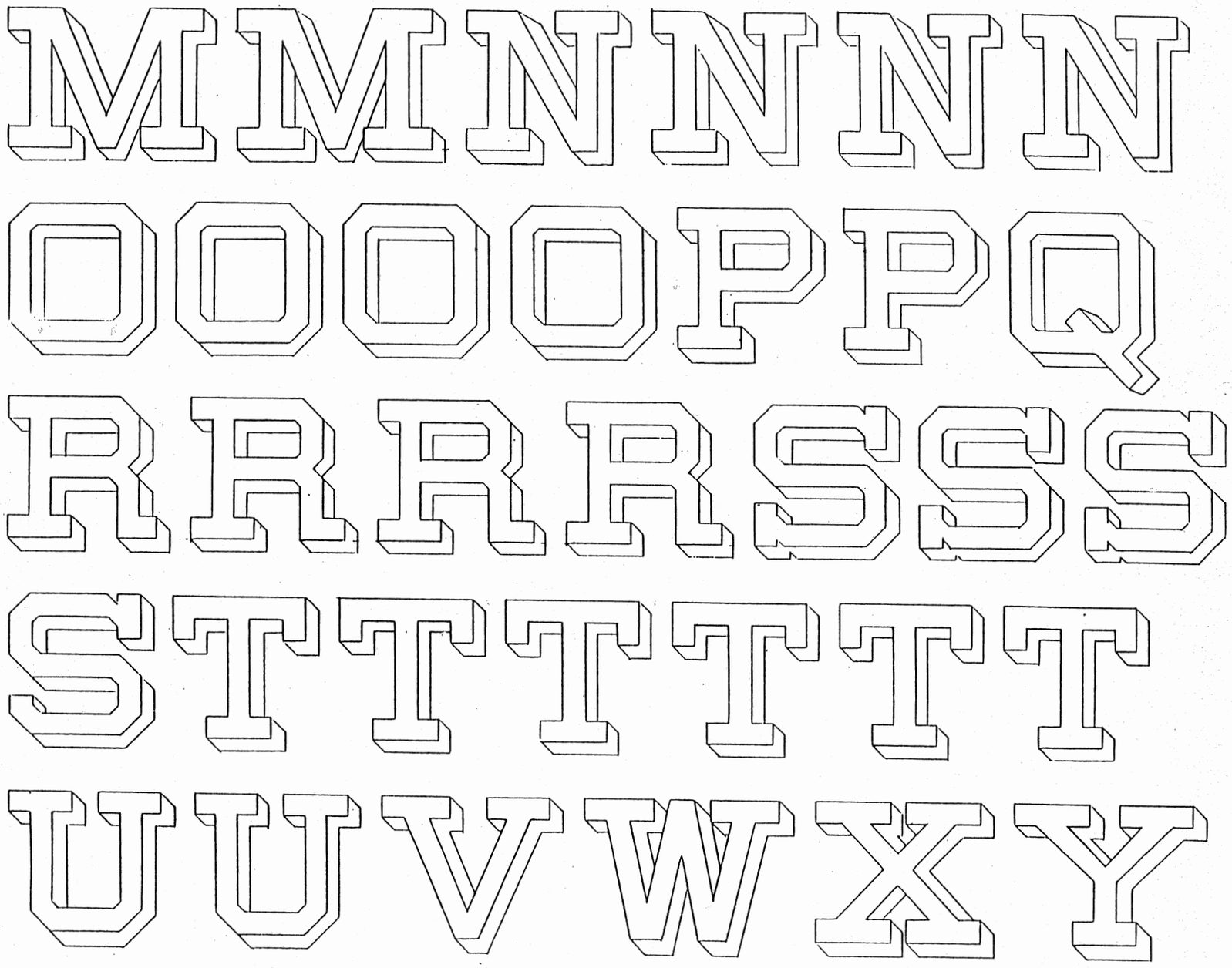


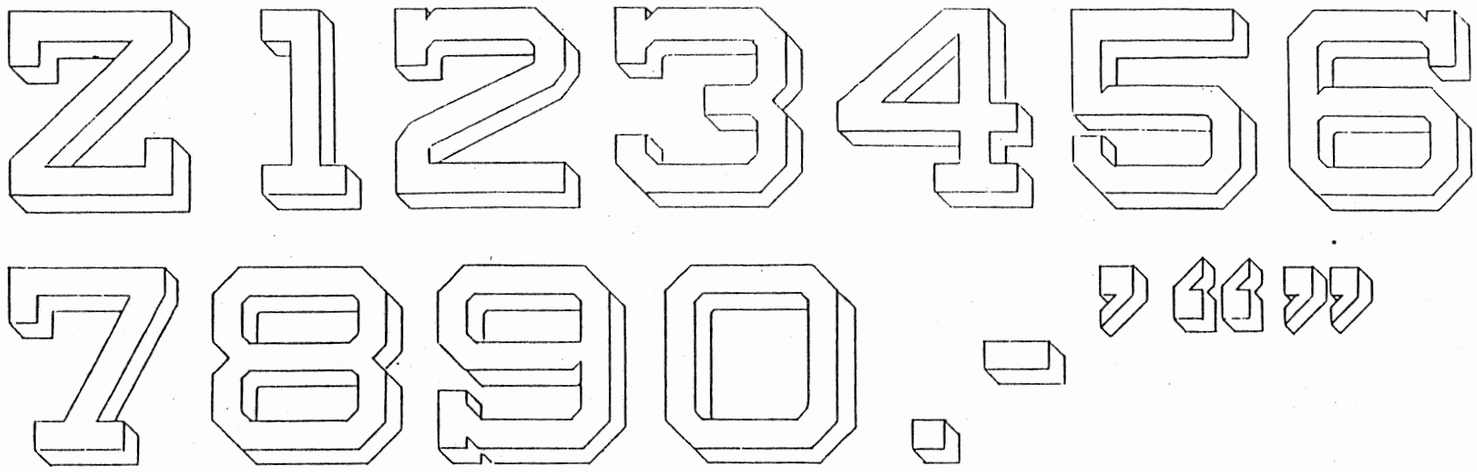




Typeface 5




MMNNNN
OOOPPQ
RRRRSSS
STTTTTT
UUVWXY

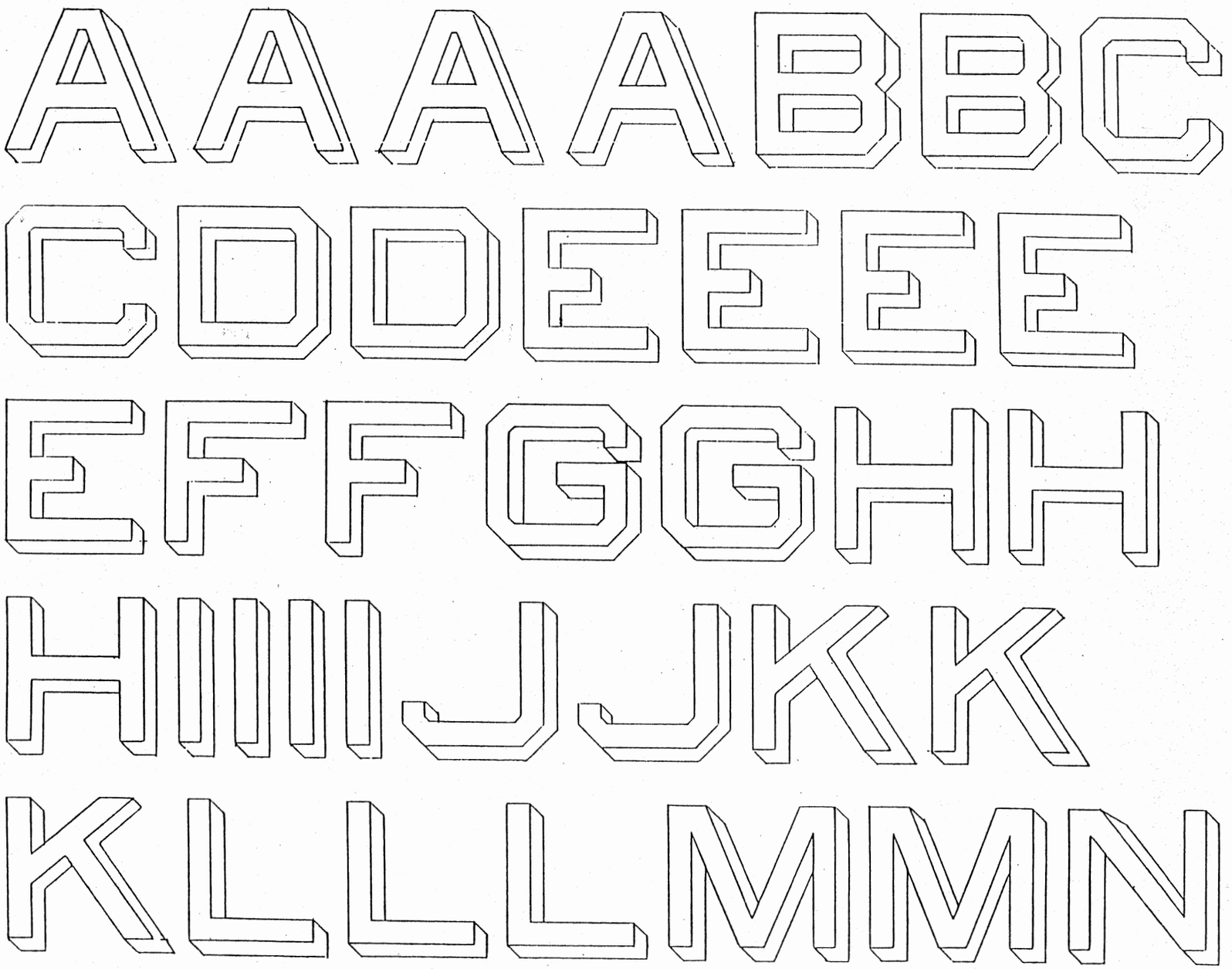

Z123456
7890.-'"

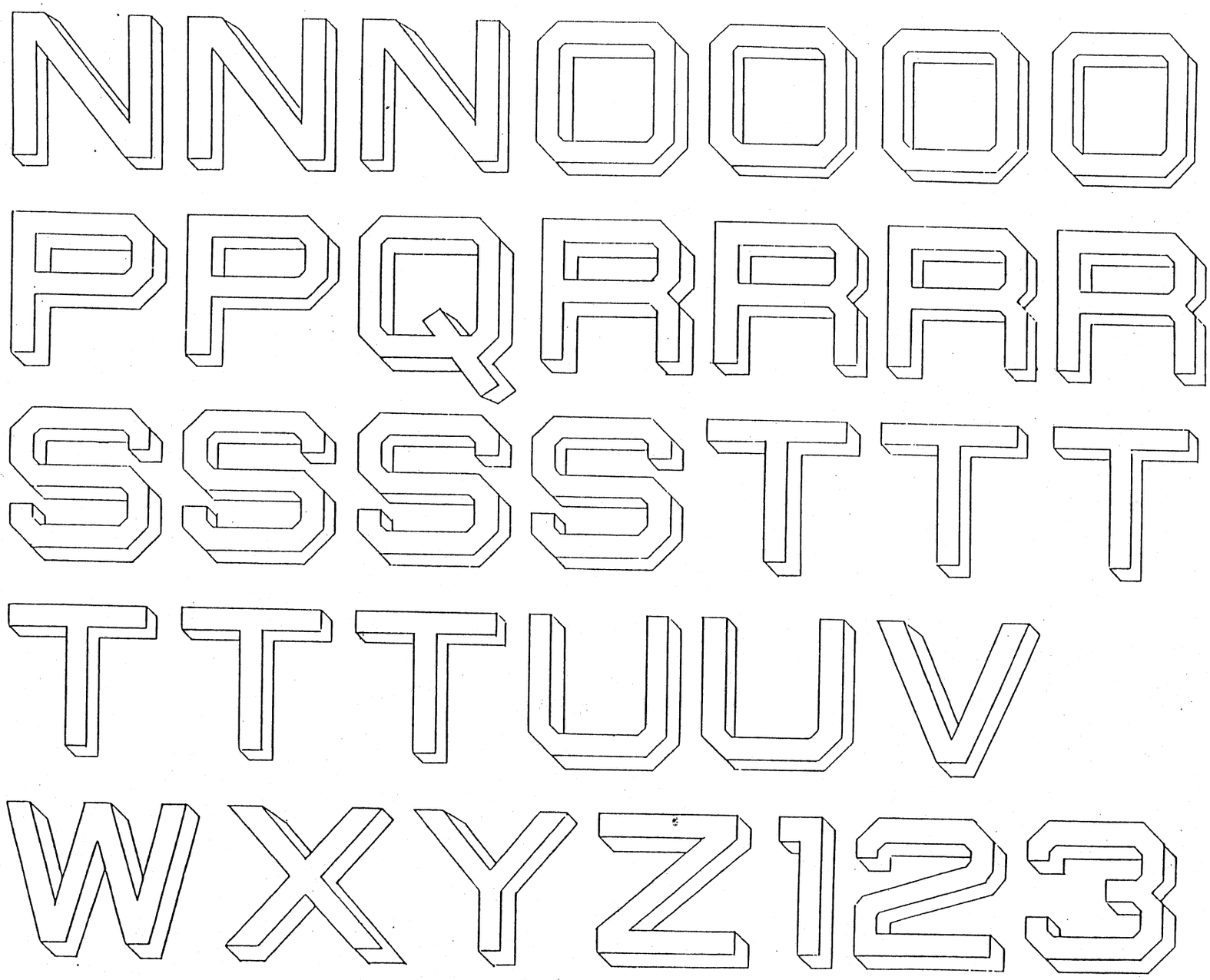
Typeface 6

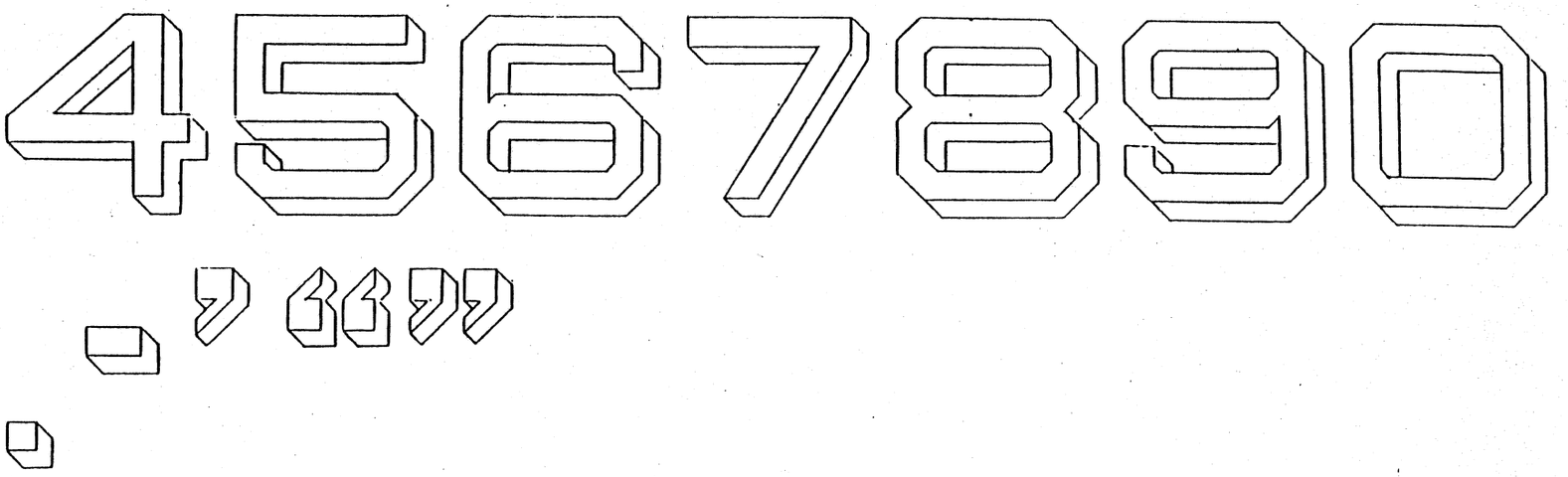
AAAAABBCCDD
EEEEEEFFGGHH
HIIIIJJKKKLLL
MMNNNNOOOO
PPQRRRRSSSS

TTTTTTUUVW
XYZ12345678
90.-'"

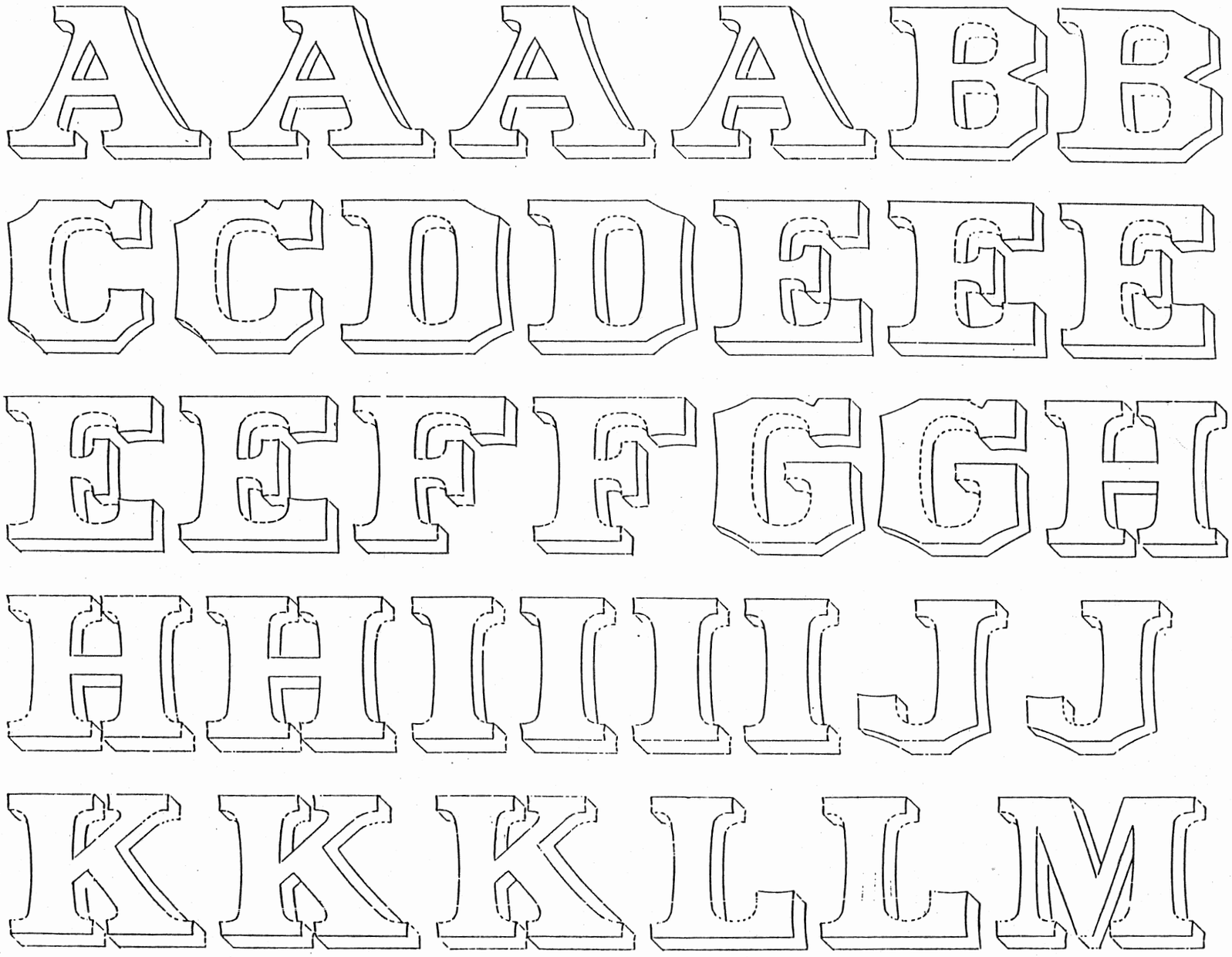
Typeface 7

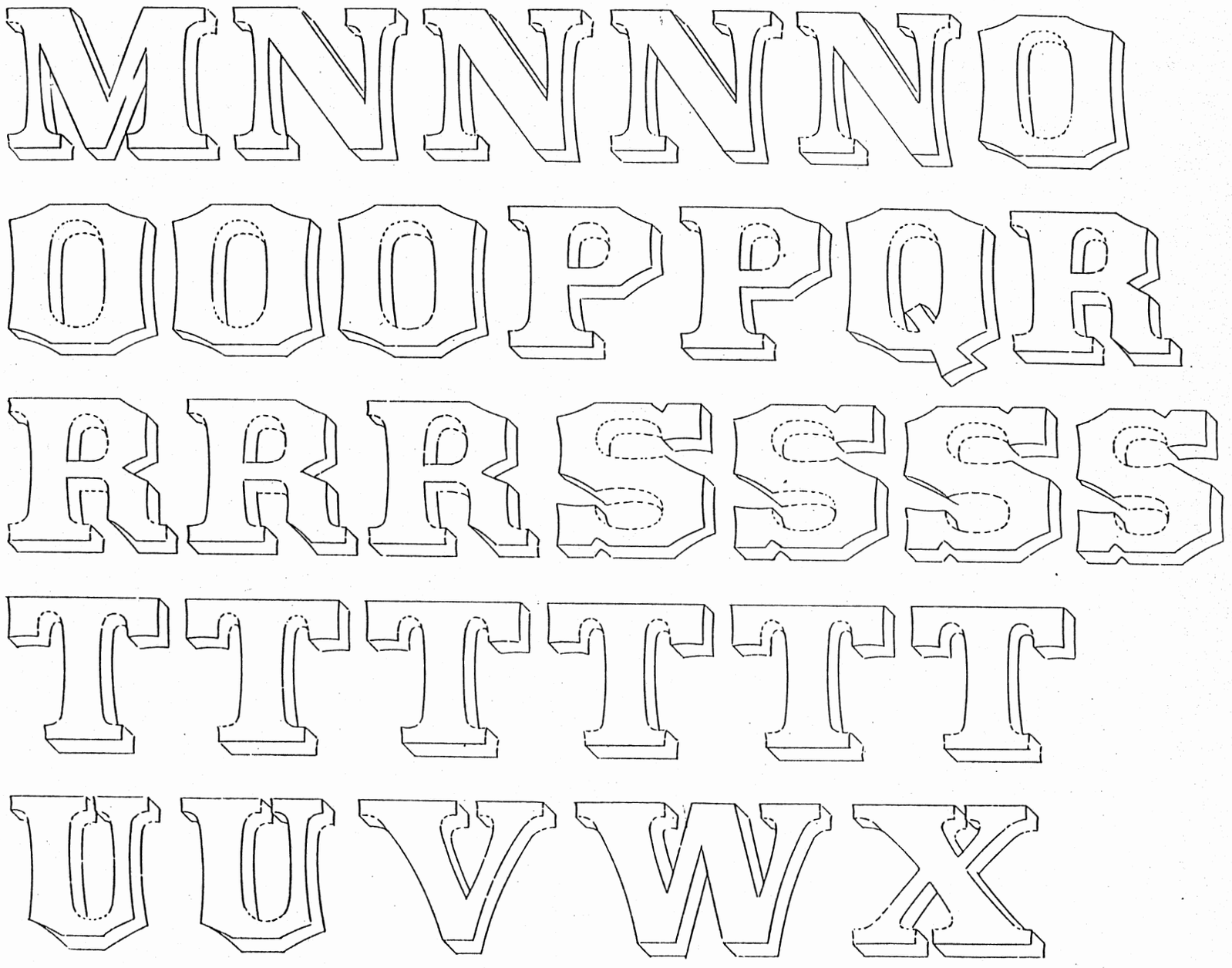


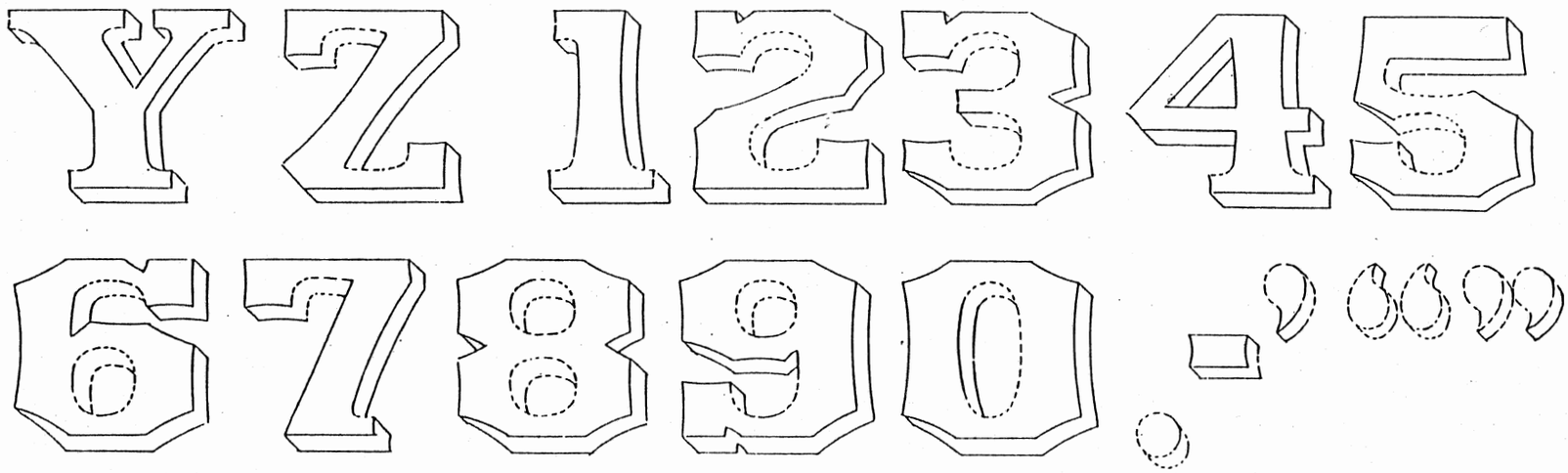




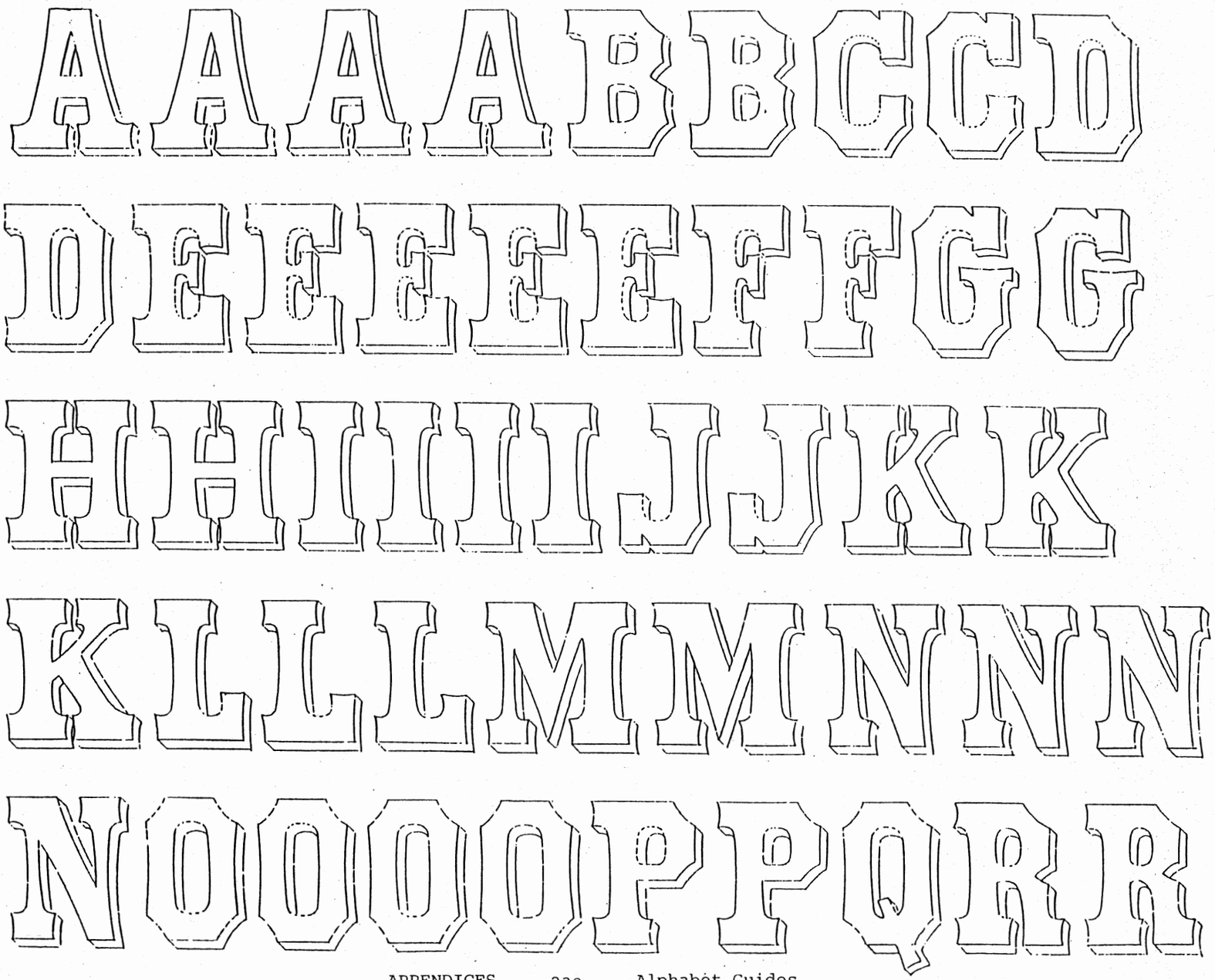
Typeface 8

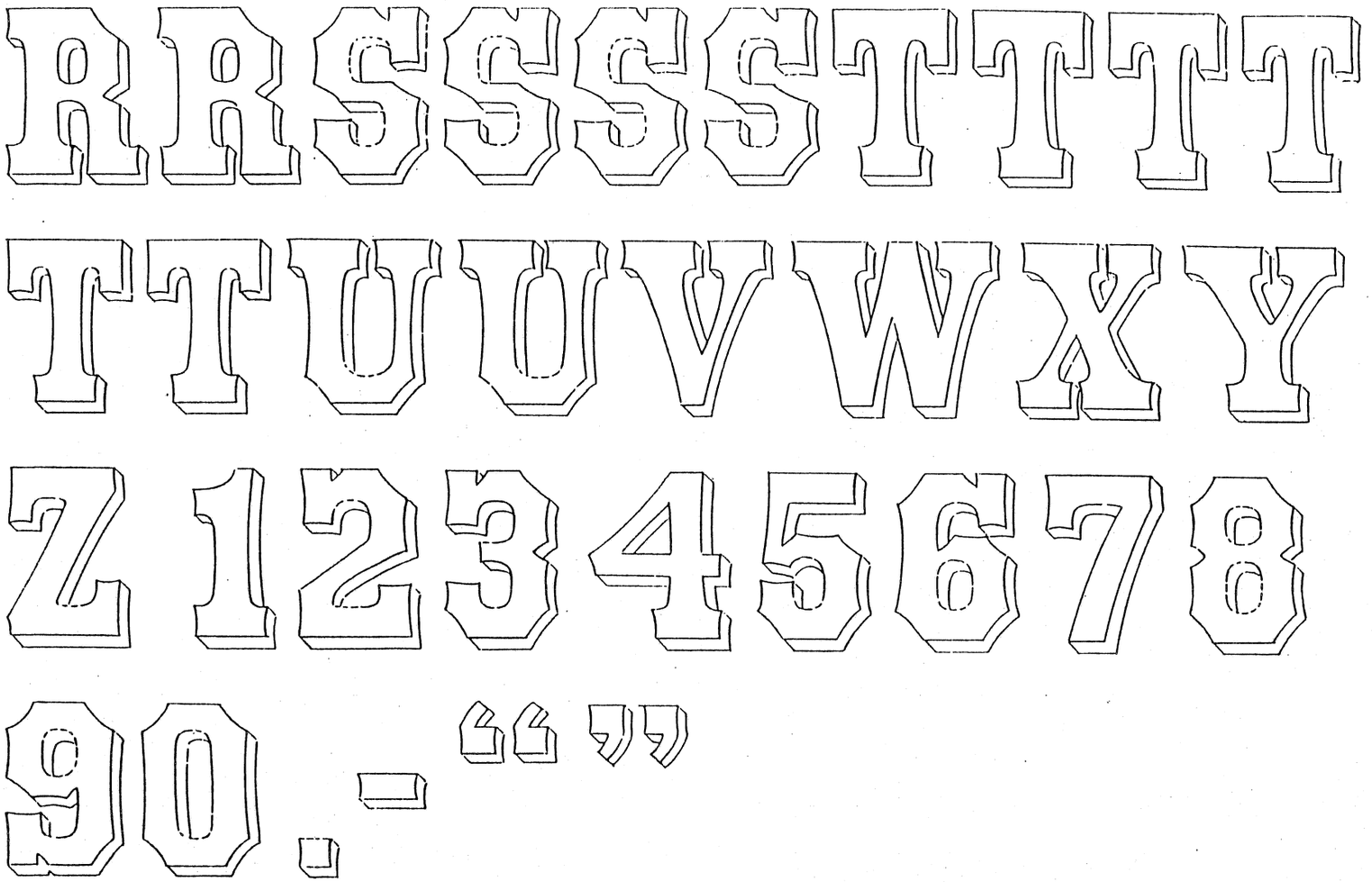






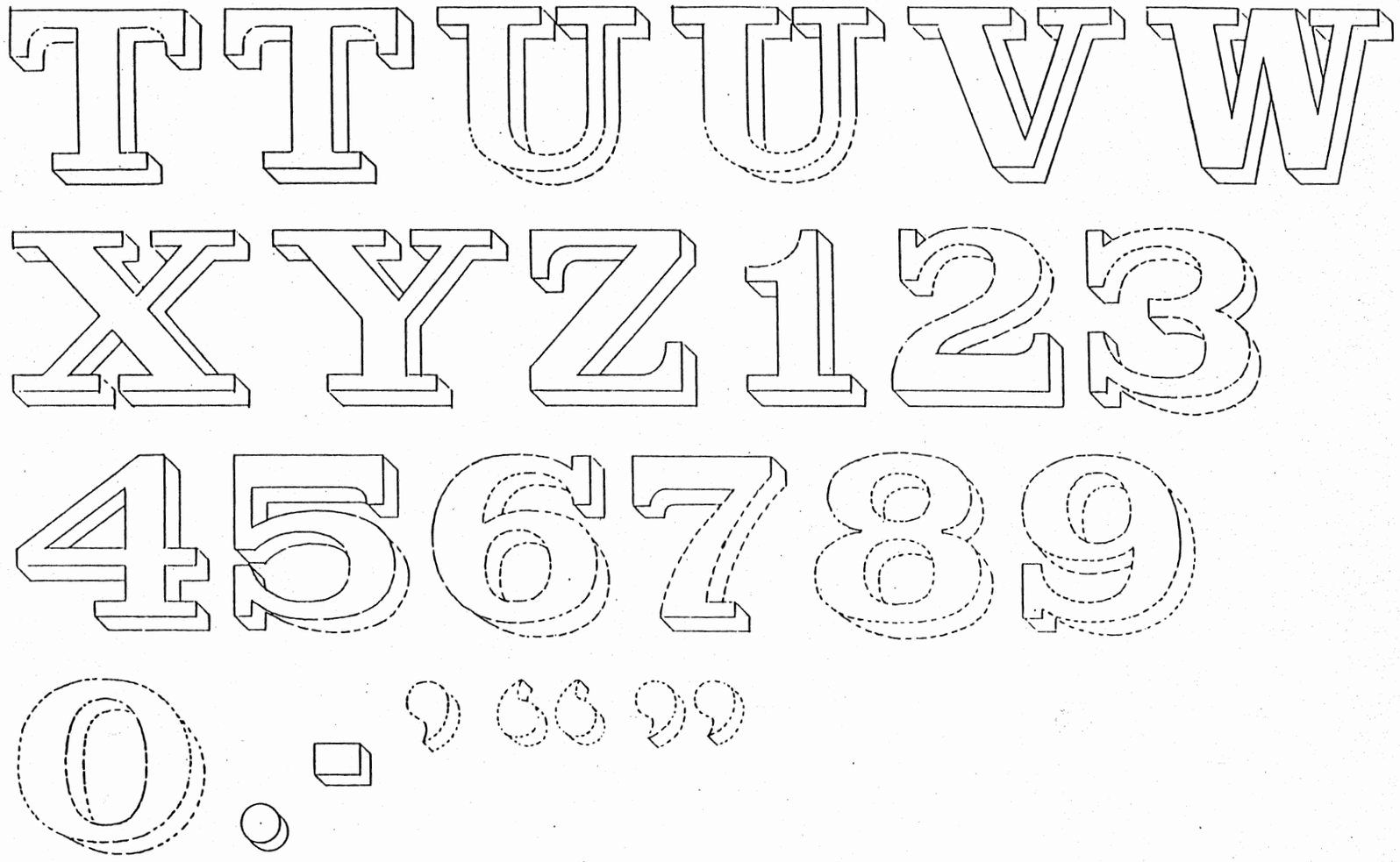
Typeface 9




RRSSSTTTT
TTUUVWXY
Z 12345678
90.-“”

Typeface 10

K L L L M M
N N N N O
O O O P P Q
R R R R S S
S T T T T

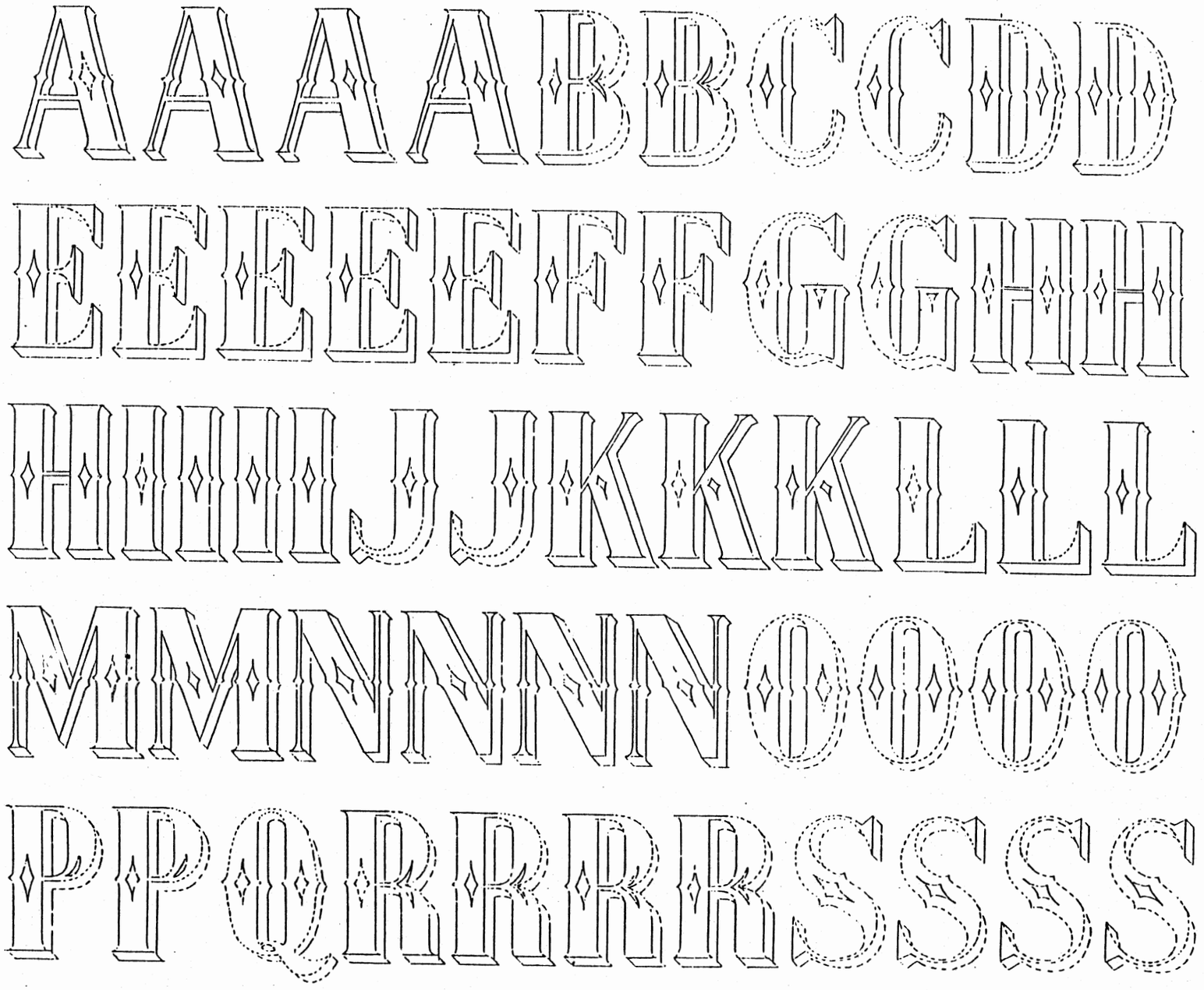

TTUUVW
XYZ123
456789
0.-'''''

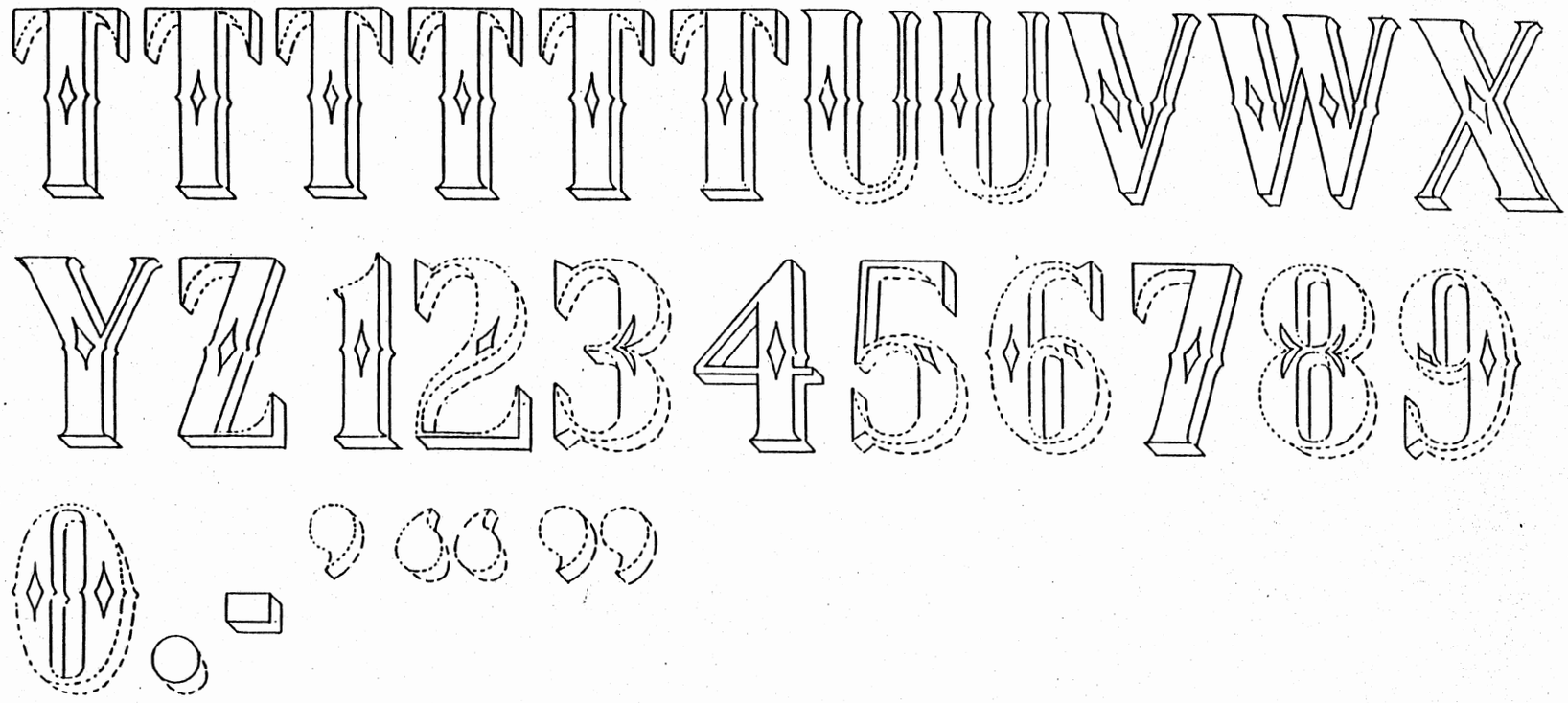
Typeface 11

PPQRRRS
SSSTTTT
TUUVWXYZ
123456789
0.-'"

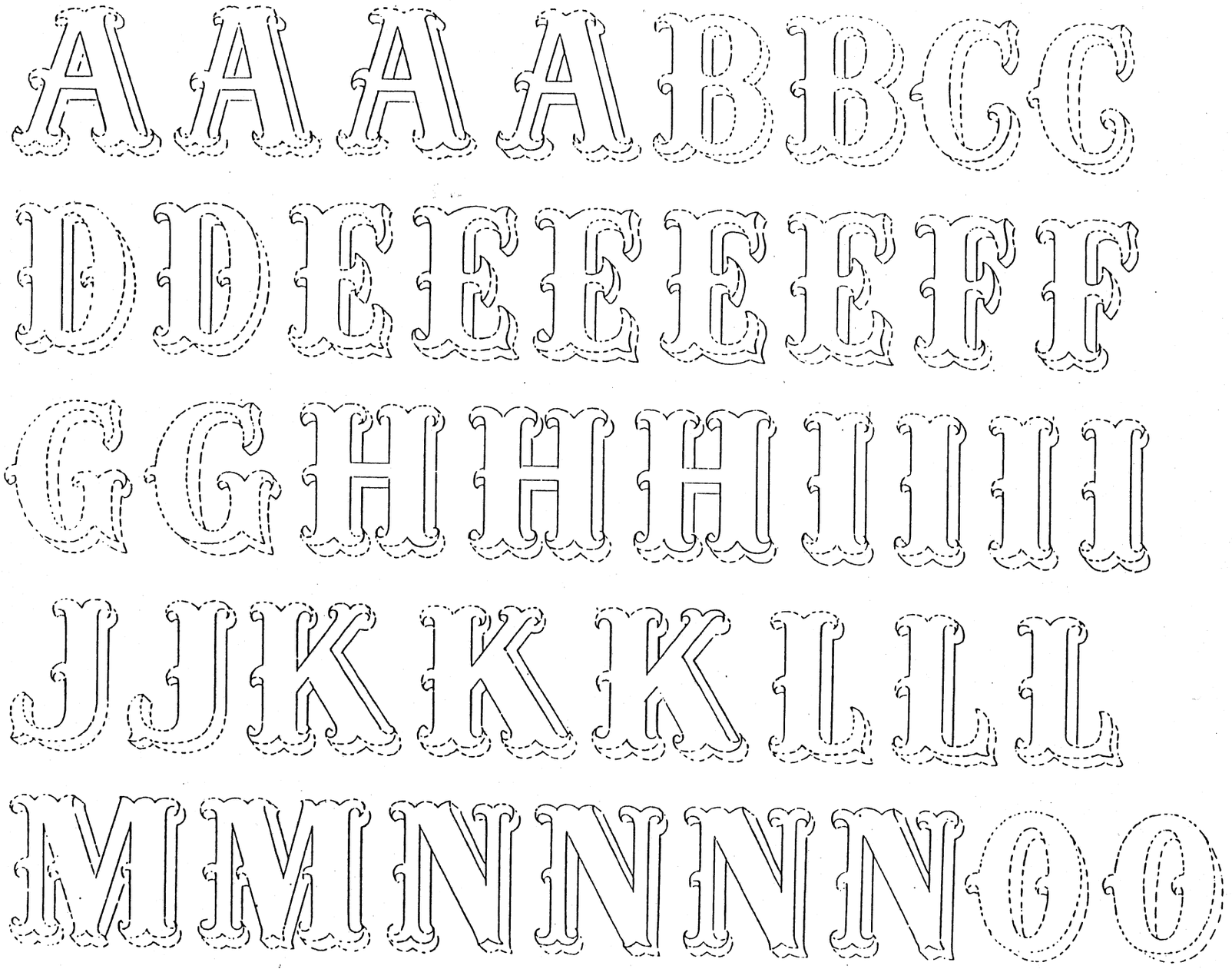
Typeface 12

Typeface 13



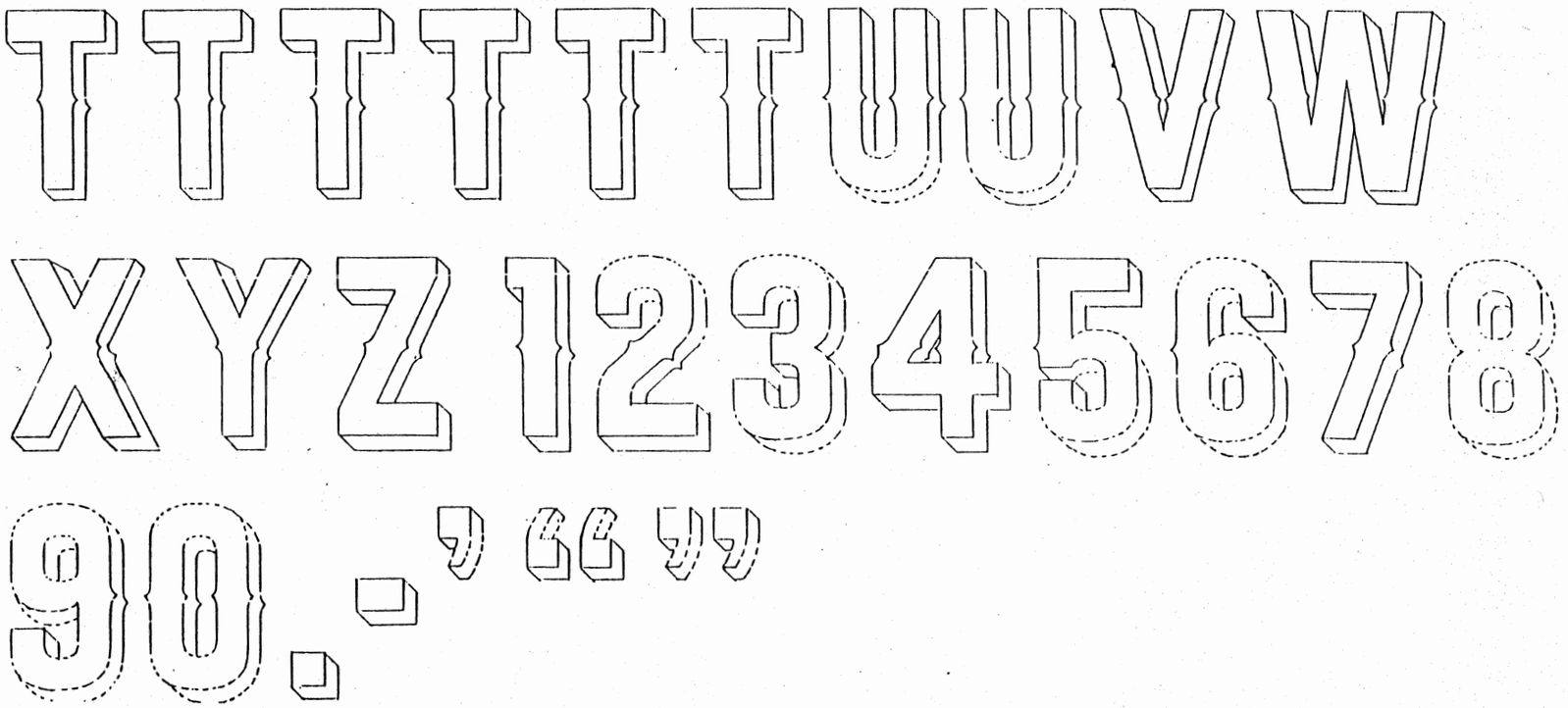


Typeface 14



Typeface 15

Typeface 16


TTTTTTUUVW
XYZ12345678
90.-'66''

Lower case Roman

Lower case san serif

Lower case Roman italic (forward slant)

abcdefghijklmn
opqrstuvwxyz

Lower case san serif italic (forward slant)

abcdefghijklmn
opqrstuvwxyz

B. PRODUCT SYMBOL AND DISPLAY GUIDELINES

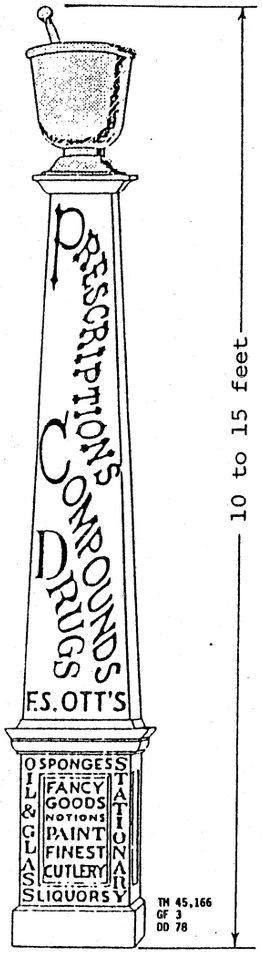
The following appendix outlines appropriate symbols and product displays used during the Old Sacramento interpretive period and suitable locations for their use. Symbols and displays are restricted to those listed and to the locations shown on the facade section diagrams. Symbols and displays will only be permitted when they are representative of the business type that the symbol and displays typified historically.

BUSINESS TYPE	SYMBOL OR DISPLAY	PAGE
Pharmacist	Mortar with Pestle	260
Tailor	Men's Coat or Shirt	262
Boot/Shoe Dealer	Men's Boot	264
Saloon/Auction House	Elephant*	265
Broom Maker/Dealer	Broom and Brushes	266
Barbershop	Barber Pole	267
Watchmaker/Jeweler	Pocket Watch	270
Optician	Eye Glasses	272
Photographer	Camera/Photographs	273
Saloon: China Dealer	Pitcher	276
Carpet Dealer	Rugs	277
Hardware Dealer	Agriculture Implements/Hardware	279
Hotels, Theaters, Saloon, Billiards	Special Gas Lamp	294
Stable	Horse	281
Tack and Harness Shop	Saddle	283
Cooper	Barrel	284
Book and Stationary Store	Book	285
Haberdasher	Top Hat	286
Gunsmith	Rifle	282
Cigar Dealer	Wooden Indian	287
Tinsmith	Tinware	288
Leather Goods	Glove	289
Meat Store	Steer	290
Stage Office	Stage Coach	292
Hotel	Inn Shaped Sign	296
Newspaper/Post Office	Writing Desk	297
Furniture	Furniture	298
Sewing Machines	Sewing Machine	301
Fresh Produce	Fruit and Vegetables	299
Stone Cutter	Stone Monuments	300
Perfume/Lamp Oil	Whale or Pig	301
Fire Department	Fire Fighting Equipment	301
Hospitality**	Deer or Elks Horns	301
Theater	Billboard	301
Hotel, Public Structure, Signaling	Flagpole	301
Dry Goods	Blankets	301
Star Theme Businessess**	Five Pointed Star	—
Wood Carver	Carved Wood Signs	301
Eagle or "American" Business Themes**	**Eagle or federal shield**	—
Direction**	Human Hand	302

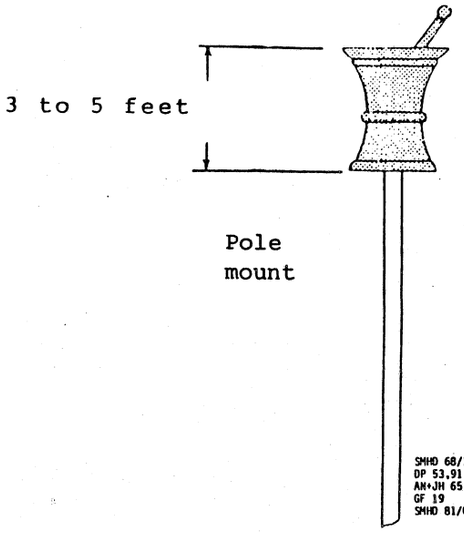
* One of the few saloon themes illustrated by a graphic image

** Universal symbols not restricted to specific business types

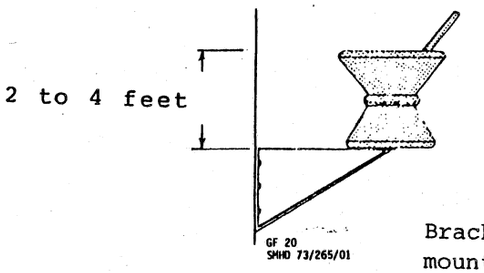
Mortar with pestle (frequently painted a metallic gold); sometimes mounted on top of a wooden obelisk --chemist, druggist, pharmacist or apothecary.



Obelisk mount

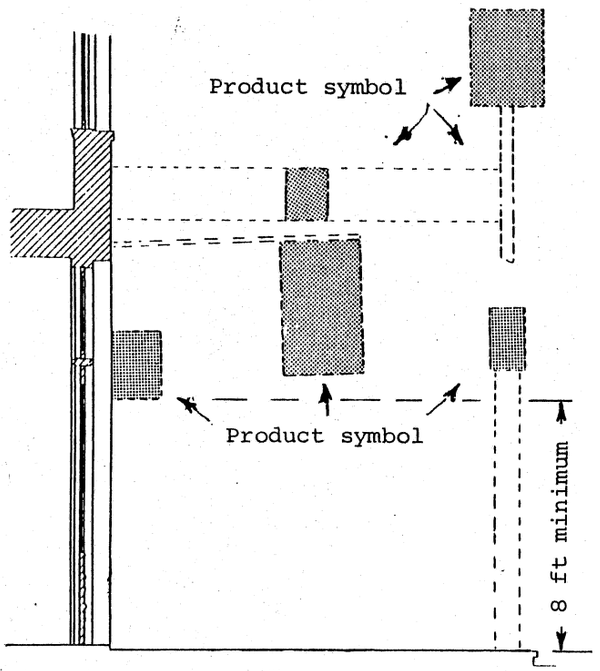


Pole mount

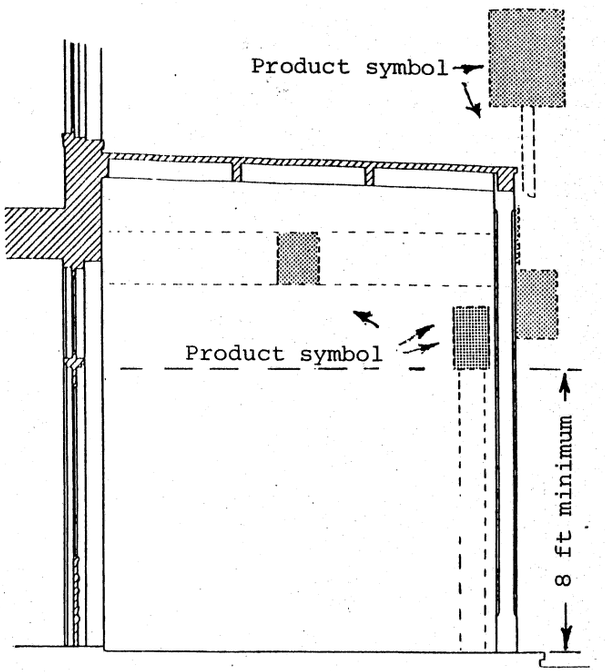


Bracket mount

Note:
Stores dealing in drugs were most commonly located at street intersections. Drug stores commonly used window displays of drugs in ornamental containers for advertisements.

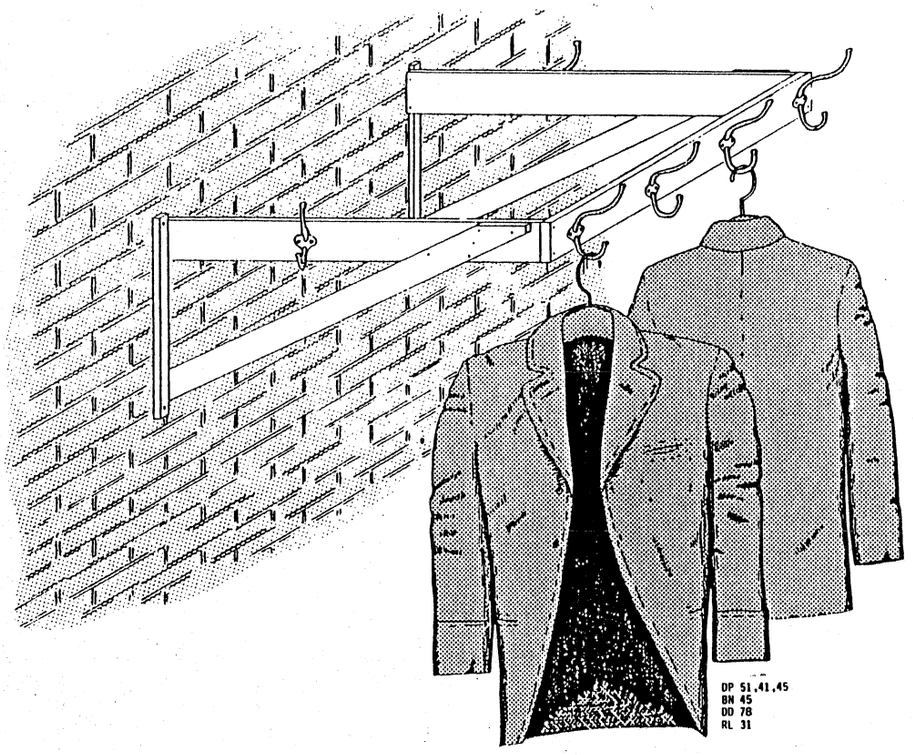


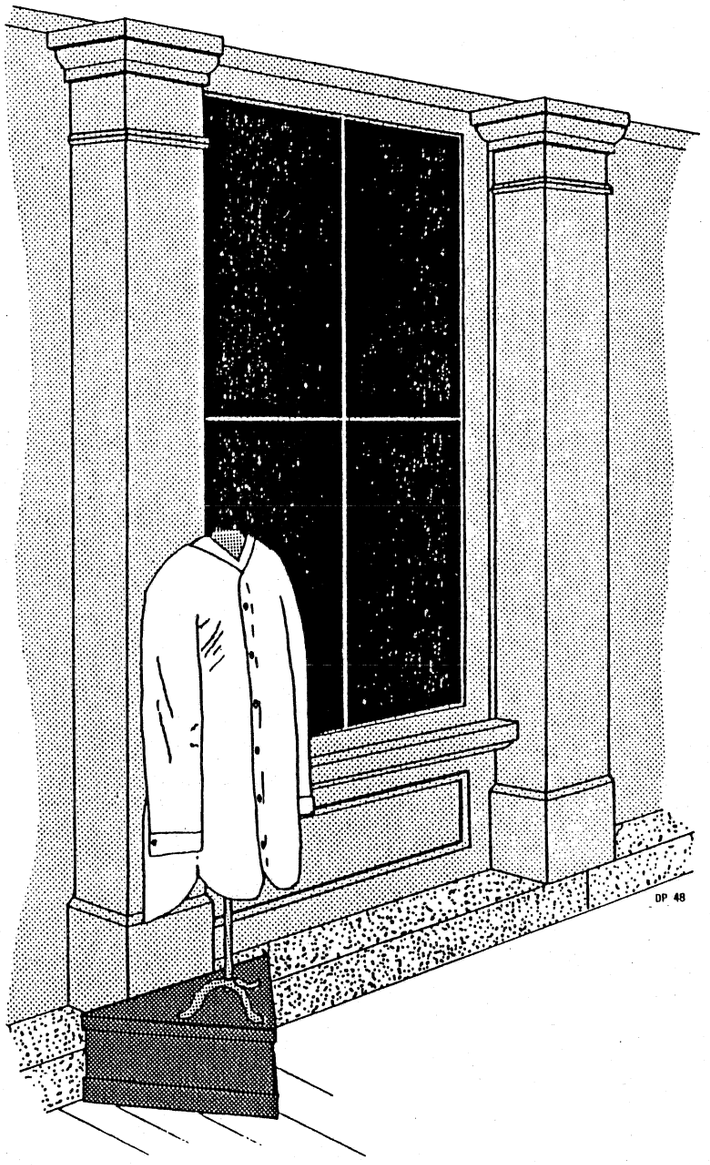
Typical symbol and product display installations when the sidewalk is not protected by a balcony or canopy.



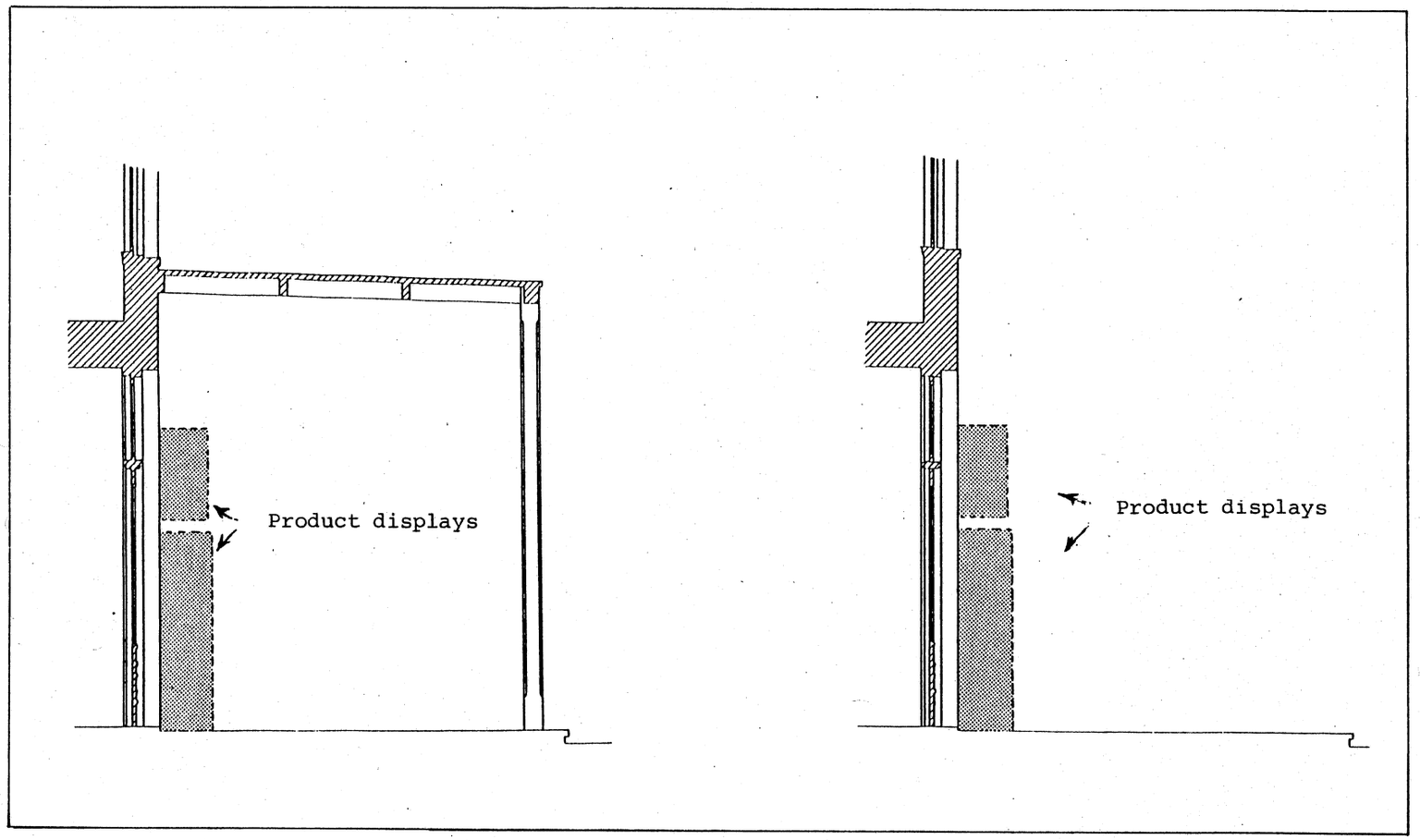
Typical symbol and product display when the sidewalk is covered by a balcony or canopy structure.

Display of coats or shirts--seamstress, tailor, clothier, shirt dealer.

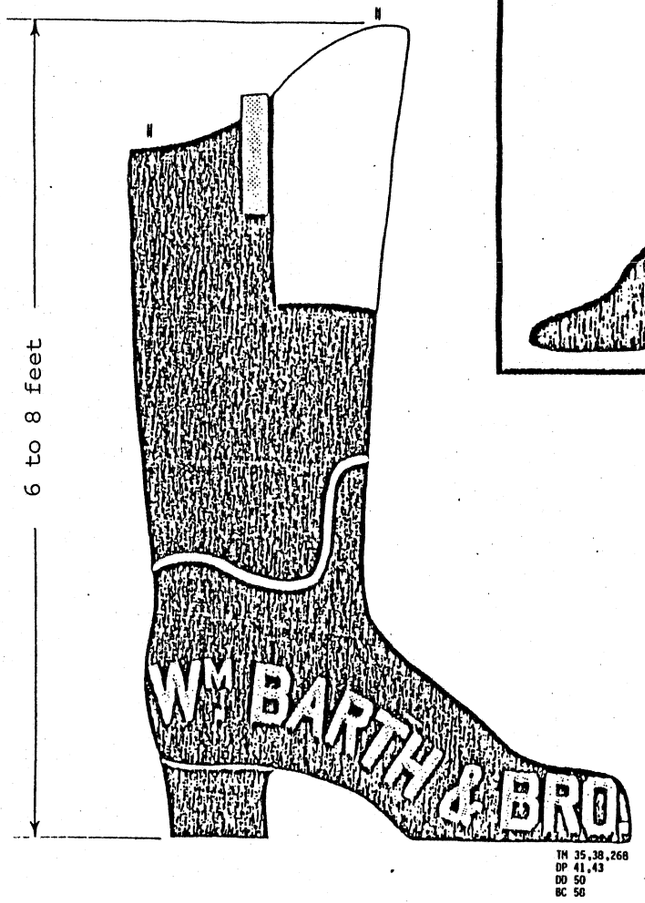


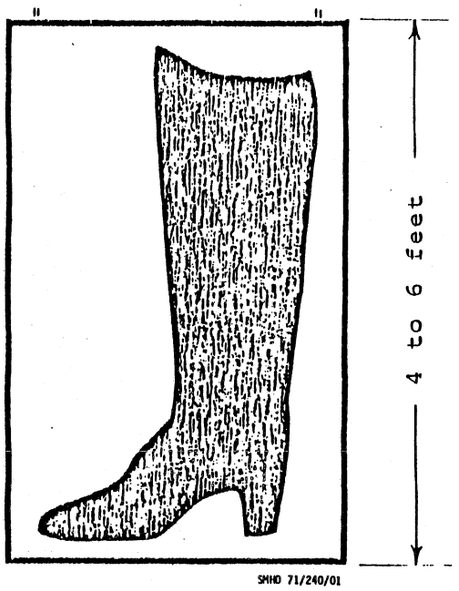


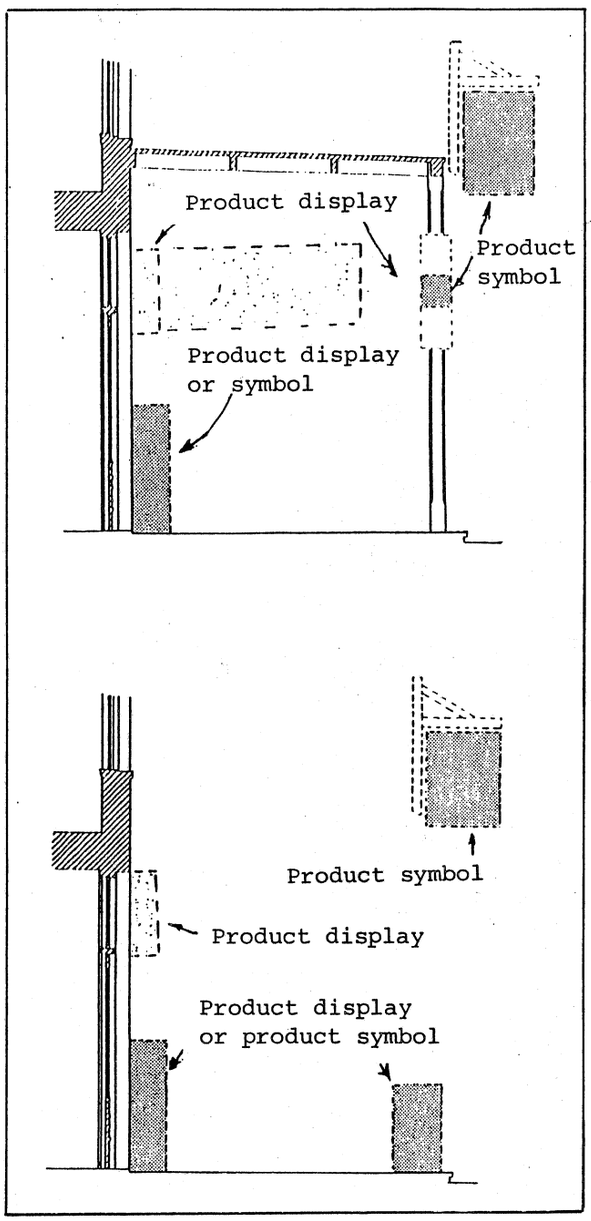
Note: Clothing forms should not be displayed without articles of clothing.


Product displays
Product displays

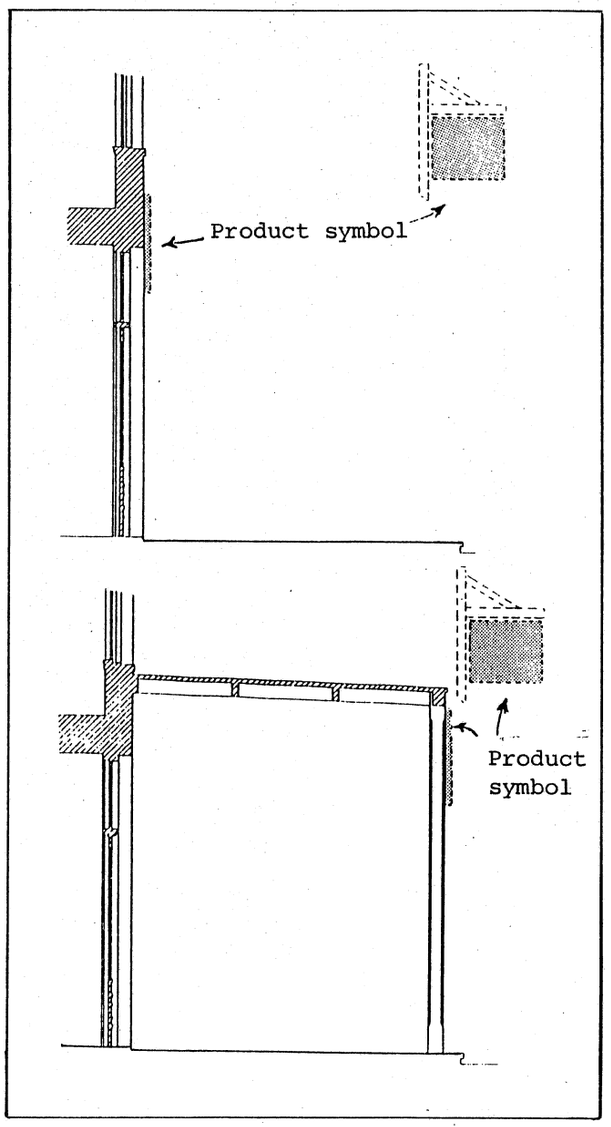
Men's boot--boot and shoe maker or dealer

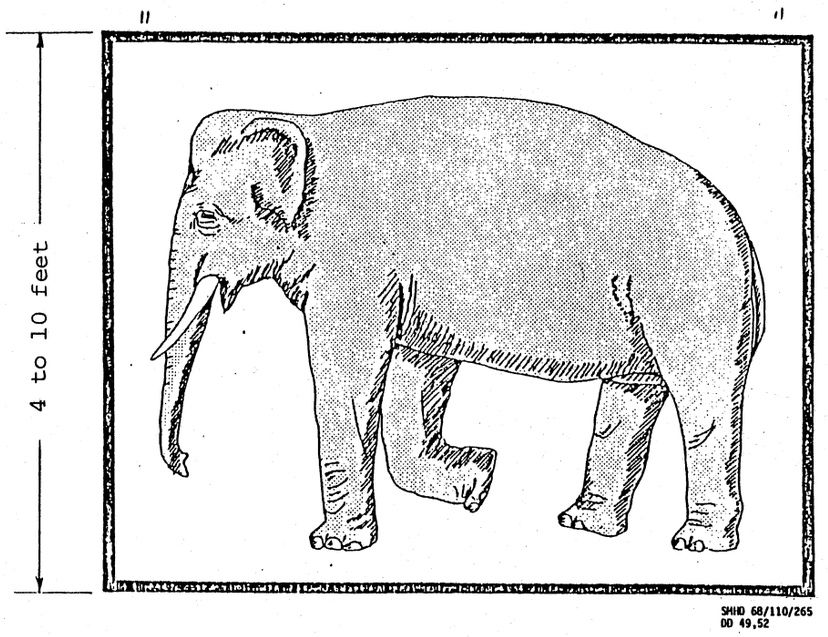




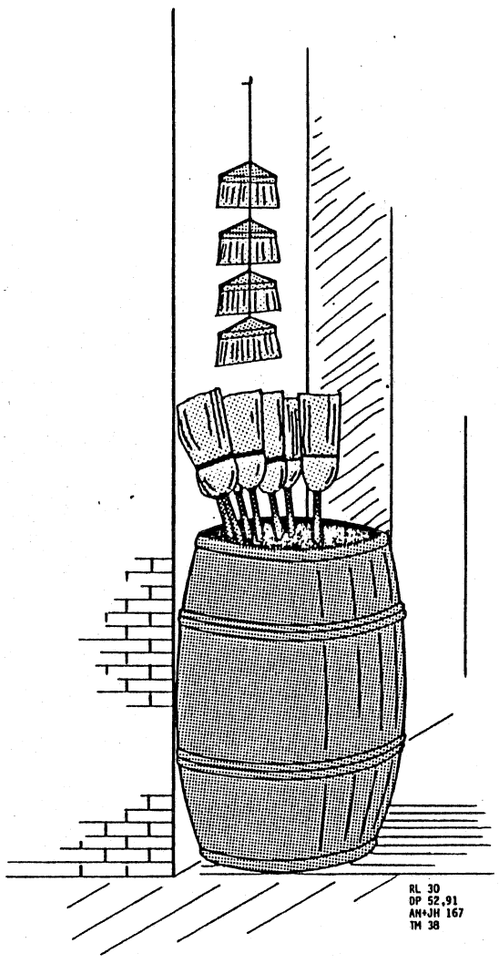


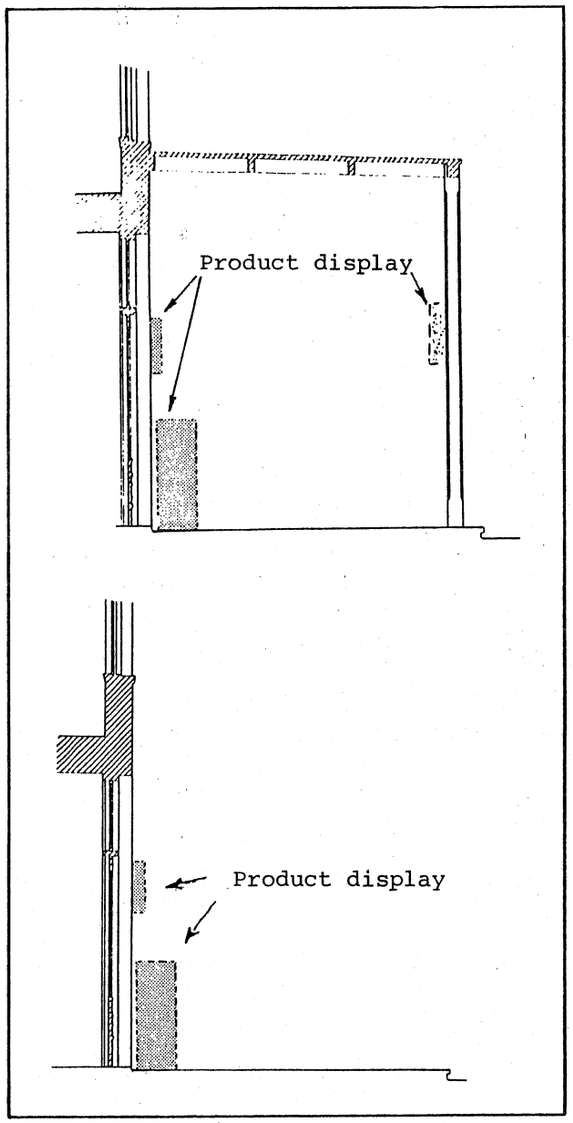
Elephant--saloon or auction house





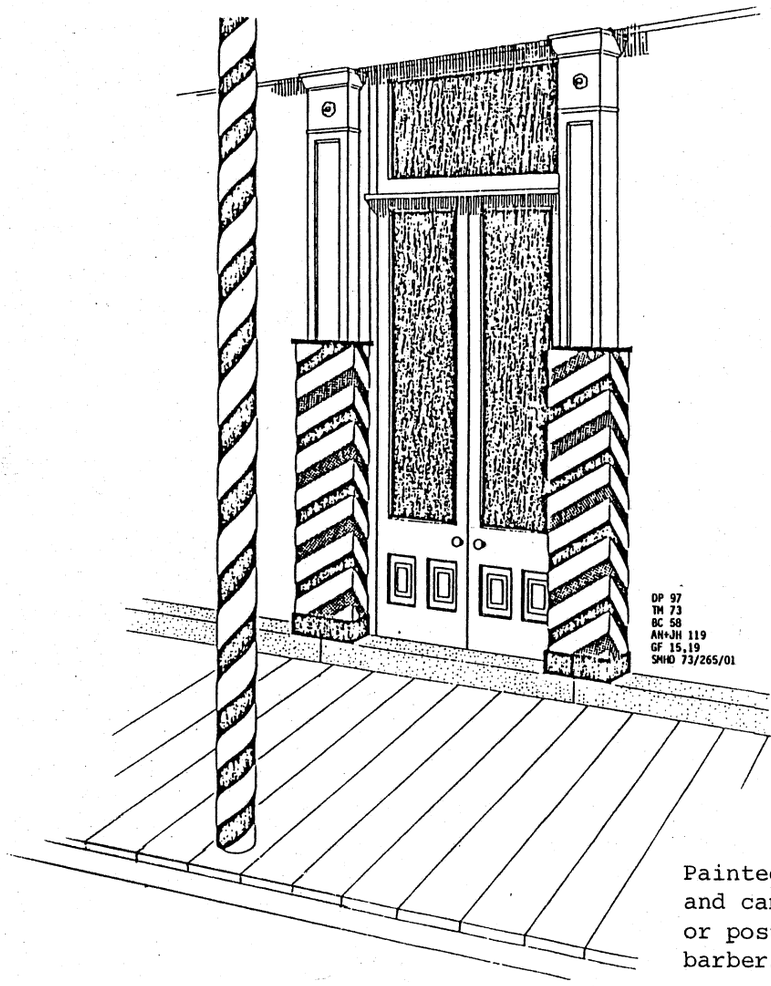
Broom and brush display--broom maker or dealer



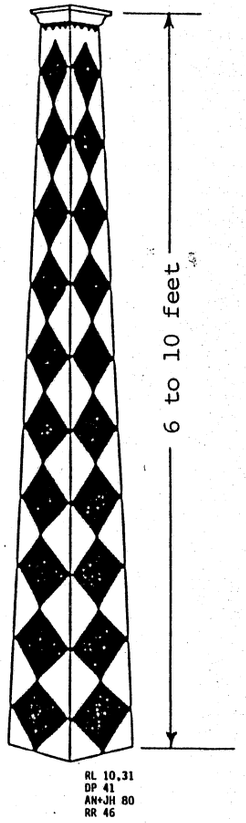


Red, white (and often blue) spiral striped* canopy column or post, free-standing column or obelisk, pilaster, turned or tapered pole projecting from the first floor building facade or canopy structure--barbarshop. (Freestanding turned wooden columns 6 to 8 feet tall with multiple raised and recessed bands date from a later period than the period represented in Old Sacramento.)

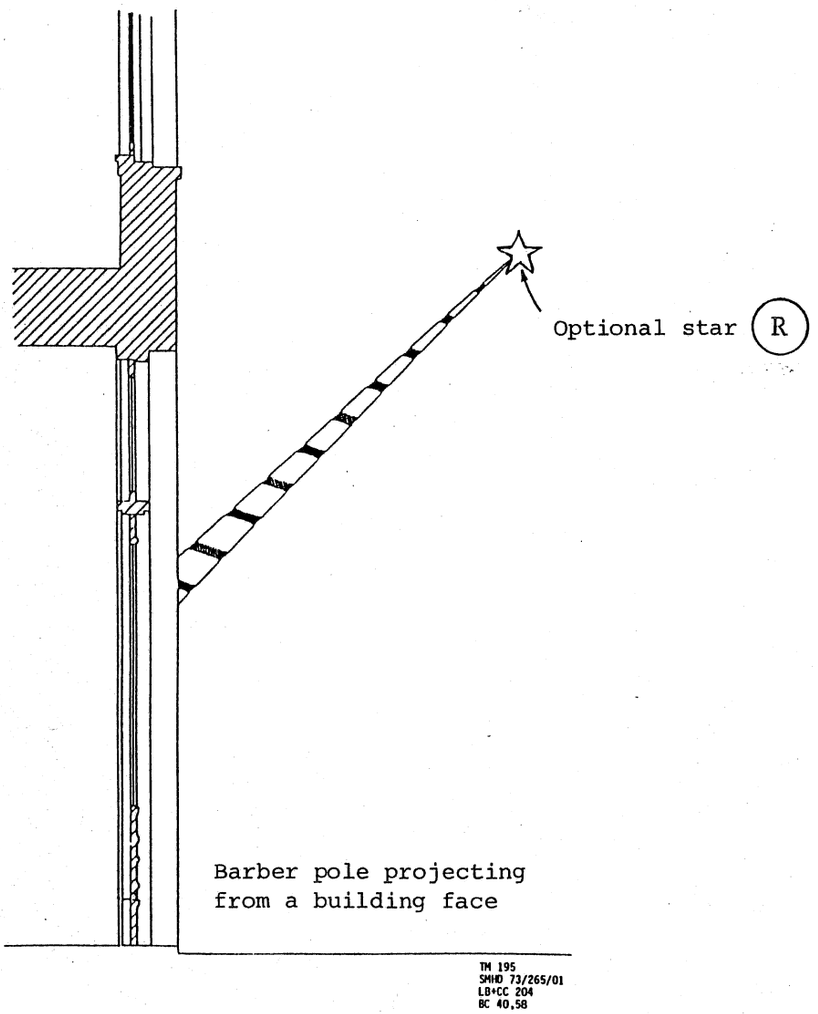
* Square obelisks sometimes used a series of red diamonds in lieu of stripes.



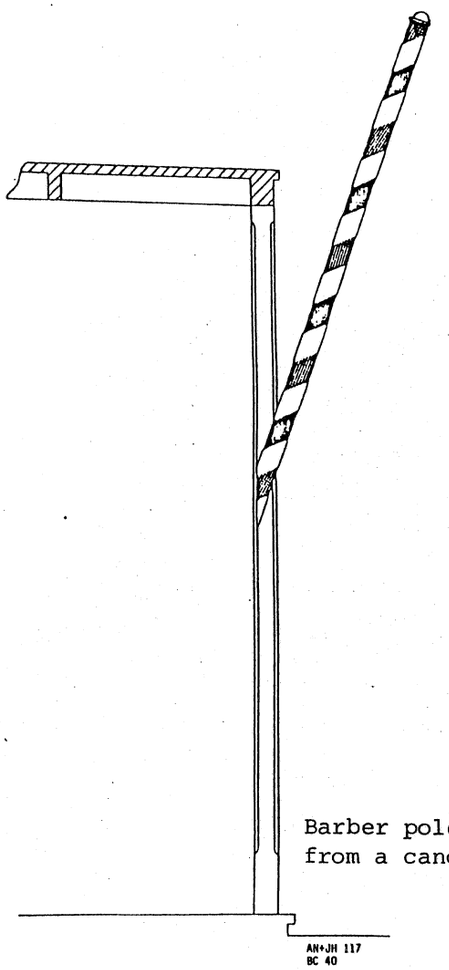
Painted pilaster and canopy column or post indicating barbershop



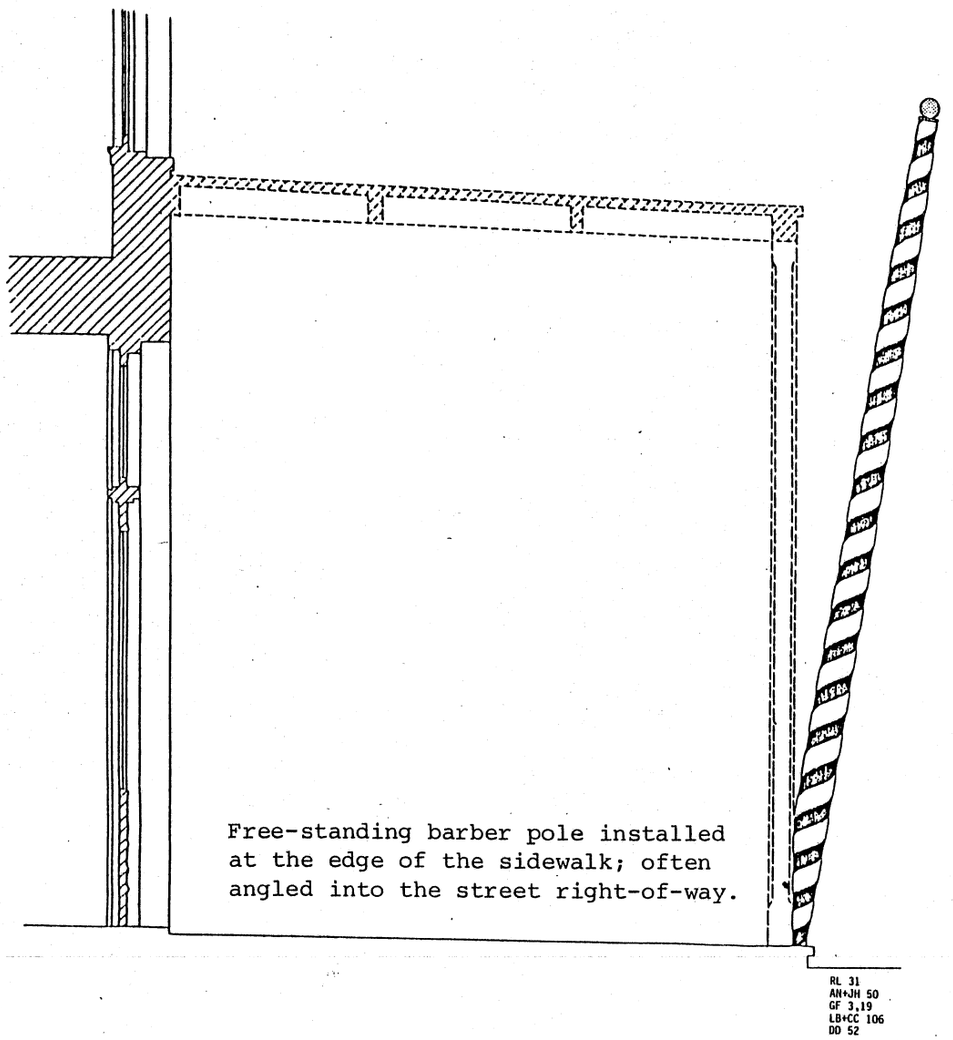
Barber shop obelisk using red diamonds in lieu of stripes

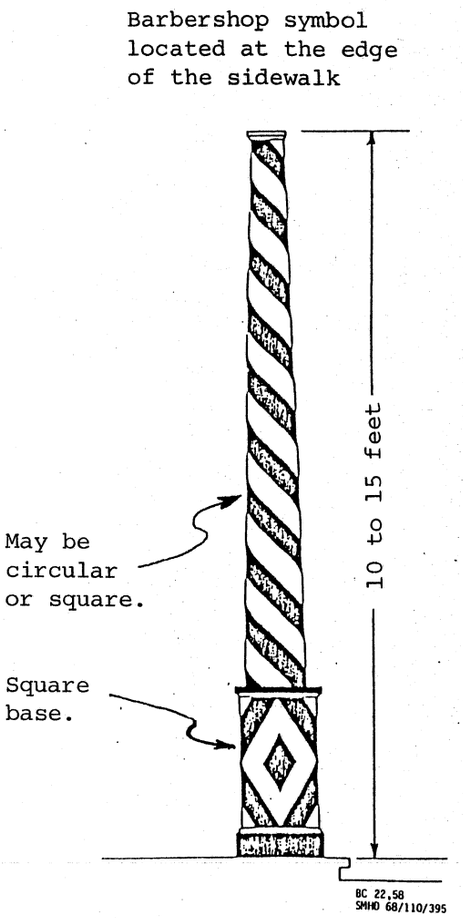


Barber pole projecting
from a building face

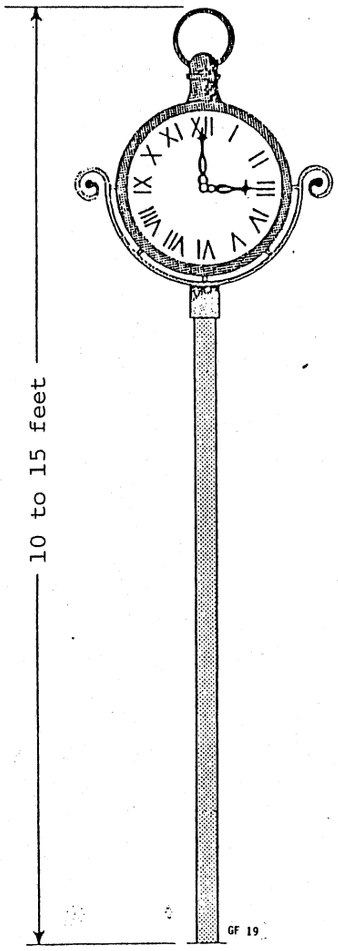


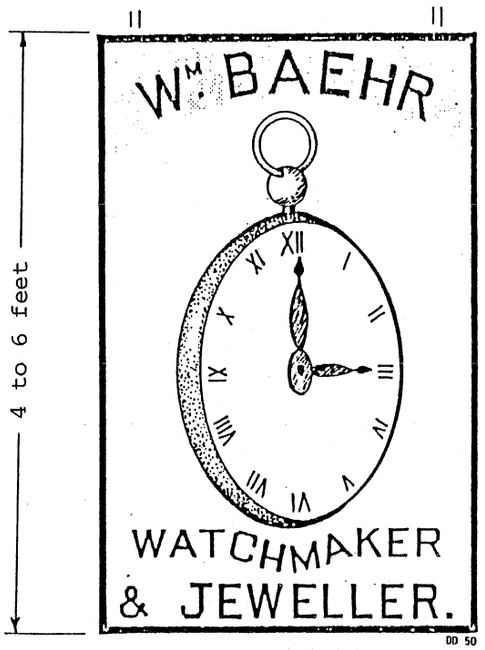
Barber pole projecting
from a canopy column

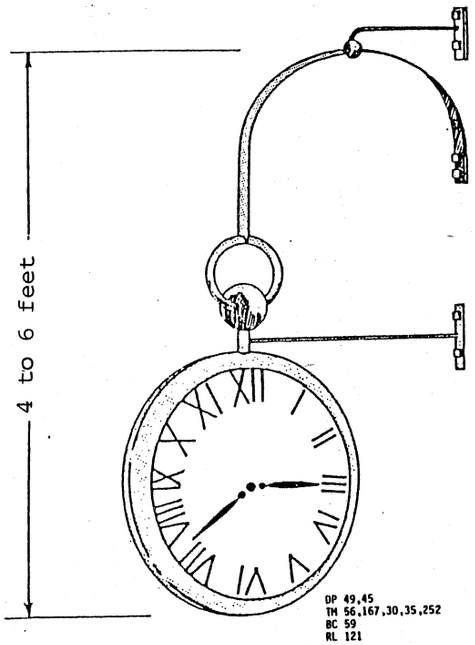

Free-standing barber pole installed at the edge of the sidewalk; often angled into the street right-of-way.
RL 31
AN+JH 50
GF 3,19
LB+CC 106
DO 52

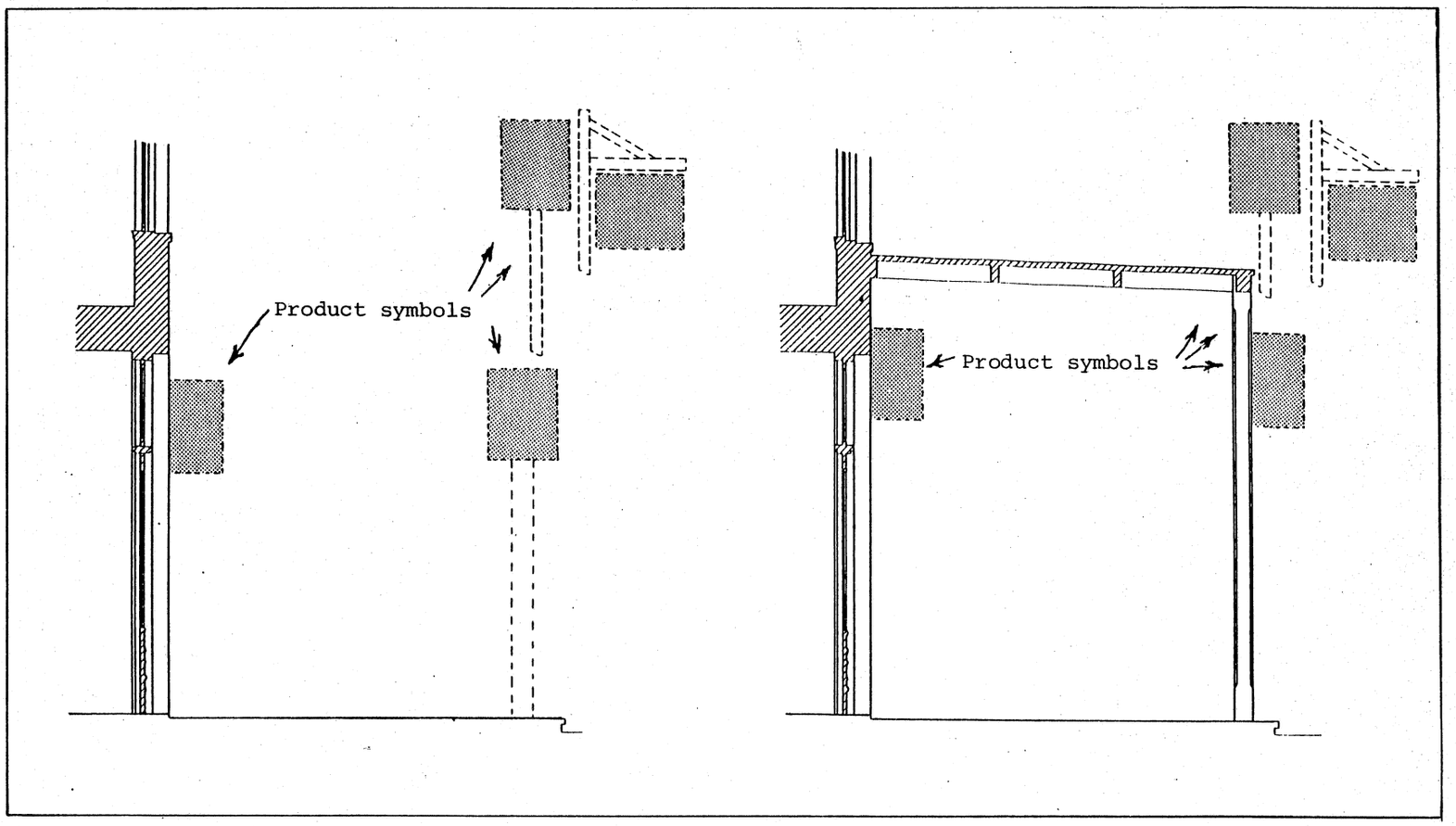

Barbershop symbol located at the edge of the sidewalk
May be circular or square.
Square base.
10 to 15 feet
BC 22,58
SMMO 68/110/395

Pocket watch--watchmaker, jewelry store.

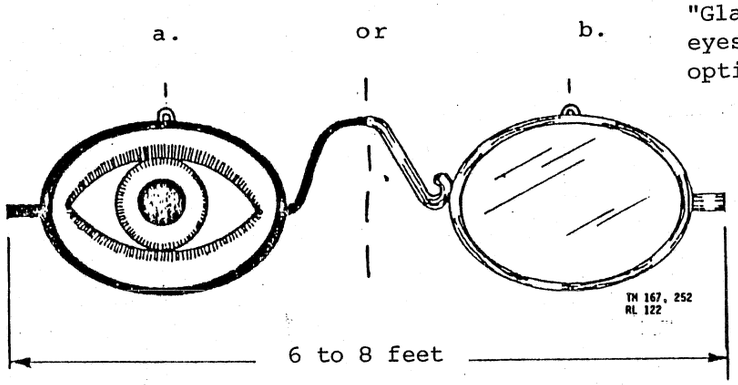




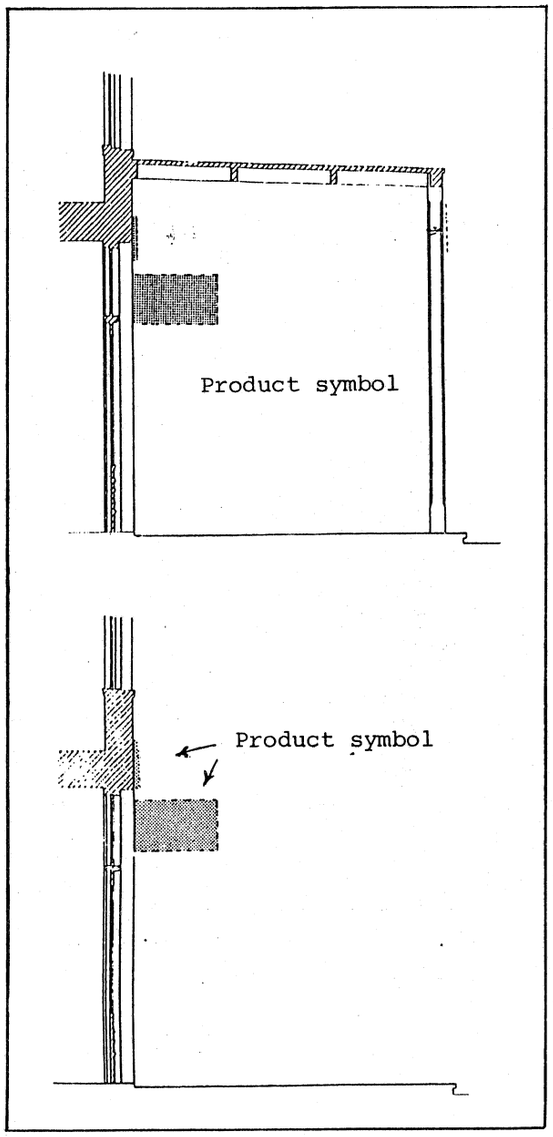



Product symbols
Product symbols

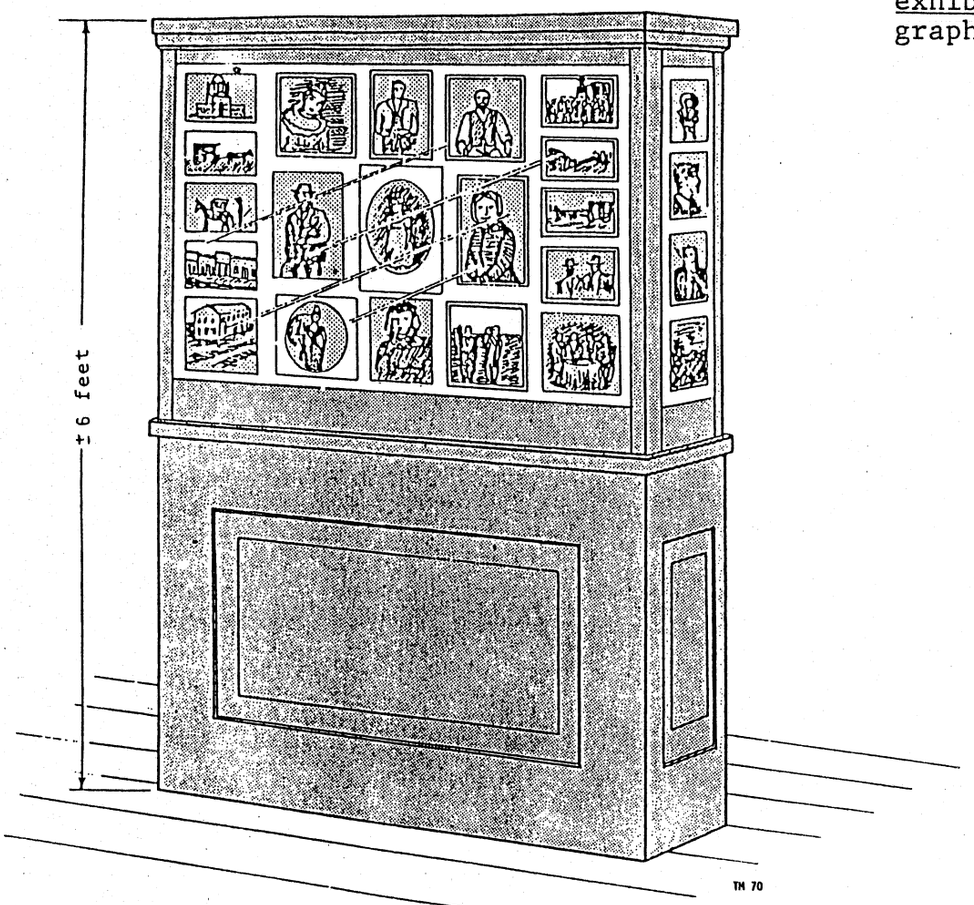
Spectacles (eye glasses)--eye doctor, optician (jeweler).



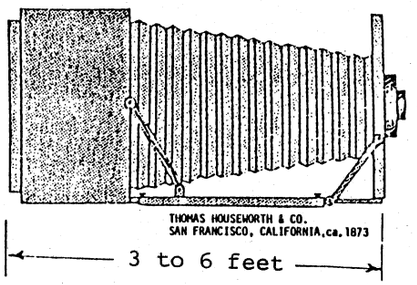
Note:
"Glass" and eyes are optional



Display of sepia-toned photographs mounted on cardstock, ambrotypes, daguerreotypes (in a store window, on a pilaster, in a free-standing exhibit case) or a camera--photographer, daguerreotypist.

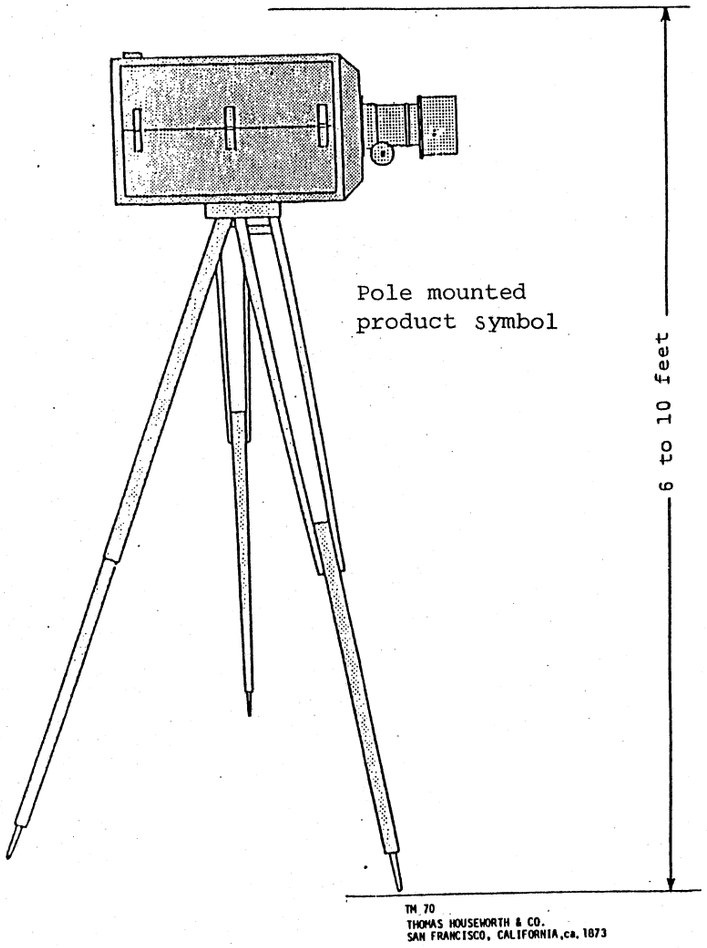


Sidewalk product display



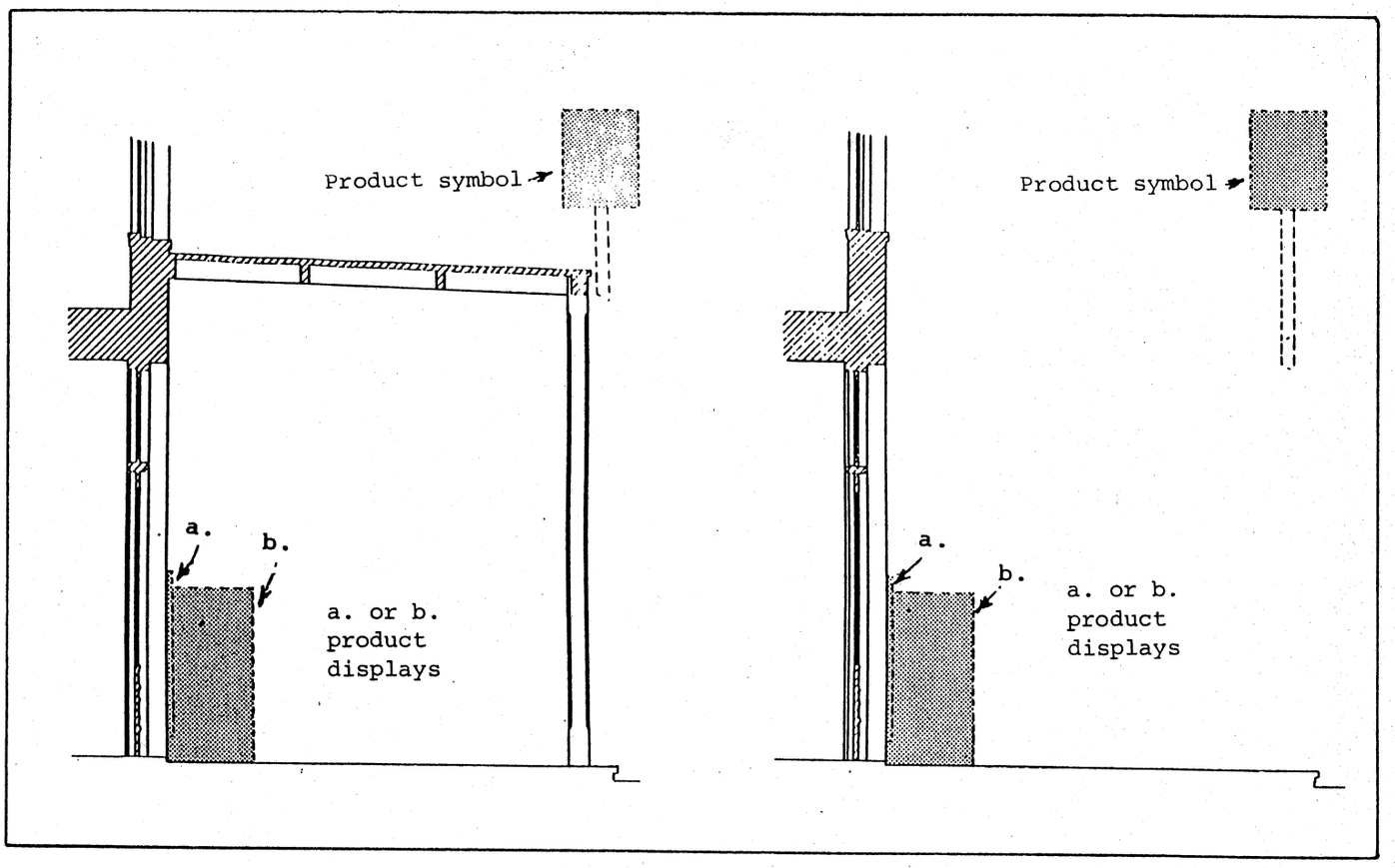
1870's-1920's camera product symbol.

1850's-1870's style camera product symbol.

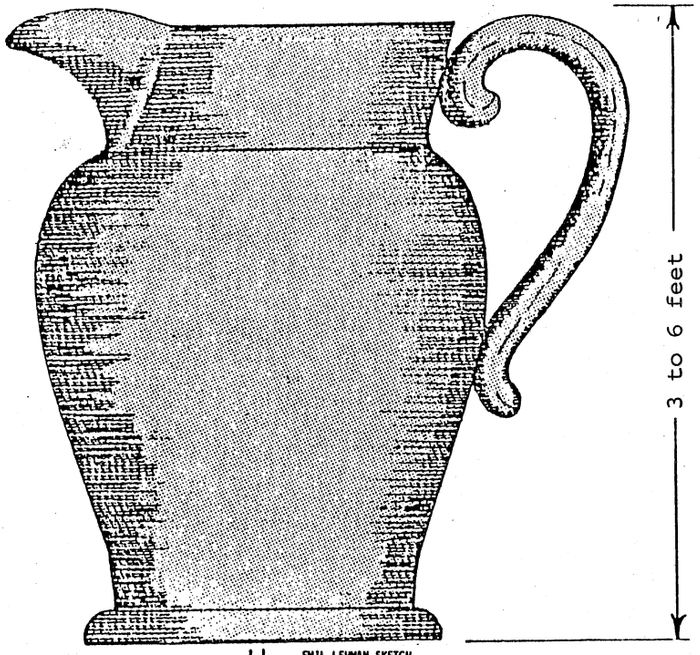


A pediment or colonial "swan neck" top profile was occasionally used on photographic display cases. See page 30

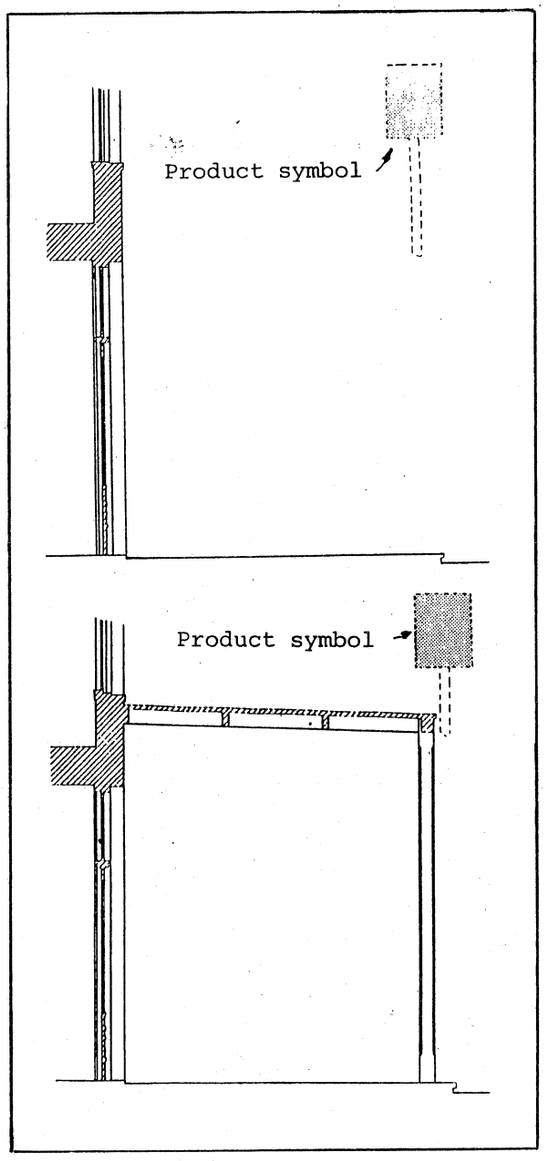
Pilaster product displays


Product symbol
a.
b.
a. or b.
product
displays
Product symbol
a.
b.
a. or b.
product
displays

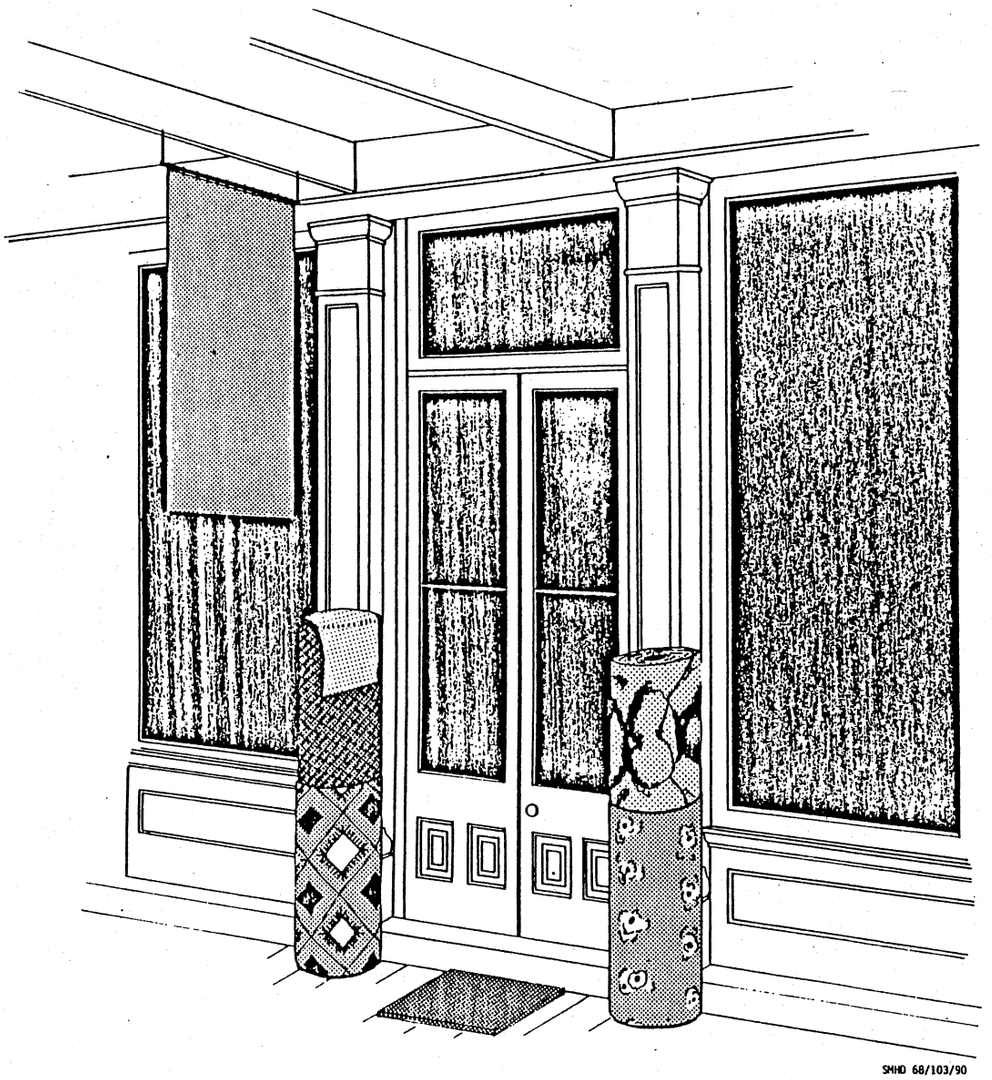
Pitcher--saloon or china and glassware dealer.

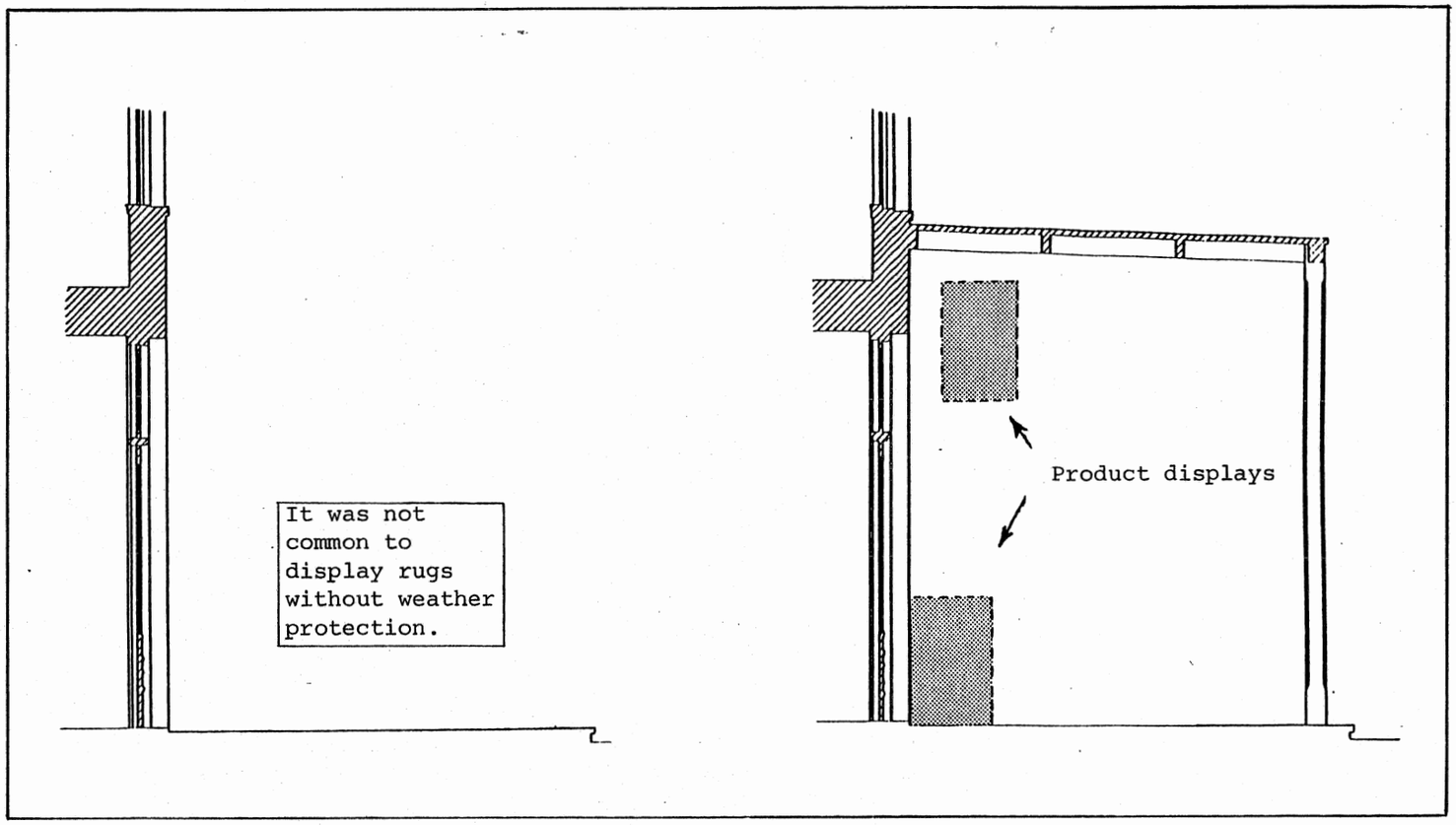


EMIL LEHMAN SKETCH
SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA, 1852
.M. HAHN PAINTING OF
SAN FRANCISCO ca. 1870,
DE YOUNG MUSEUM

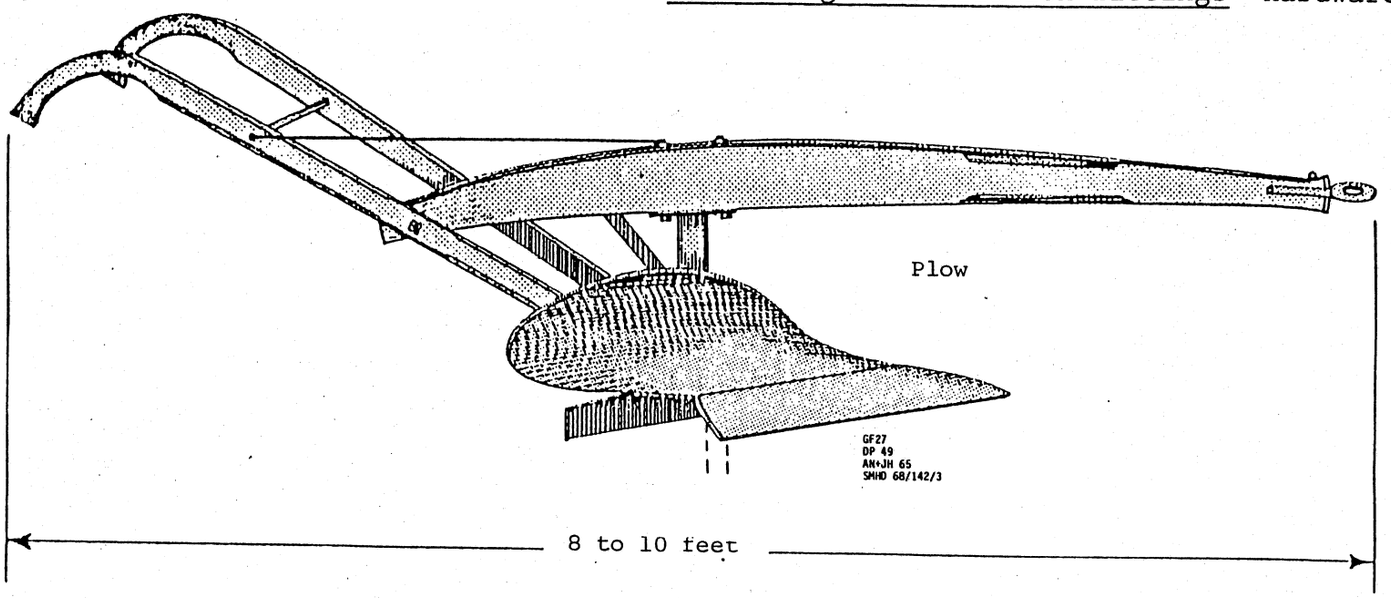


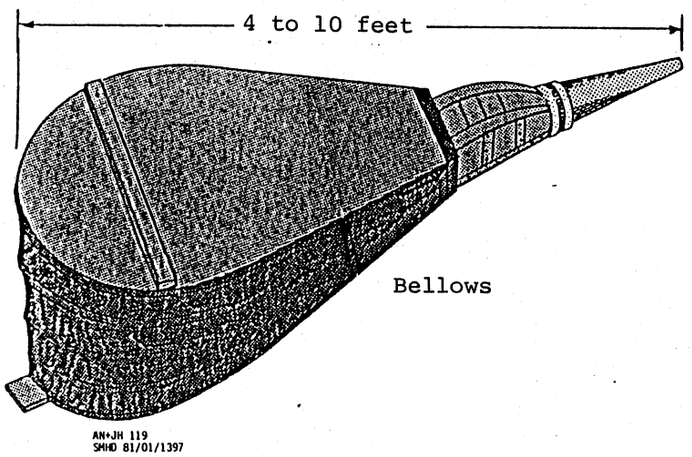
Rug display--carpet maker or carpet store.

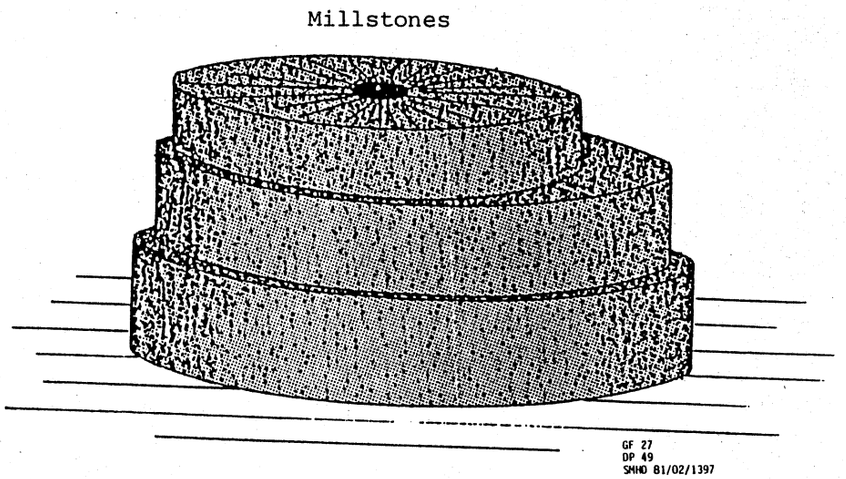


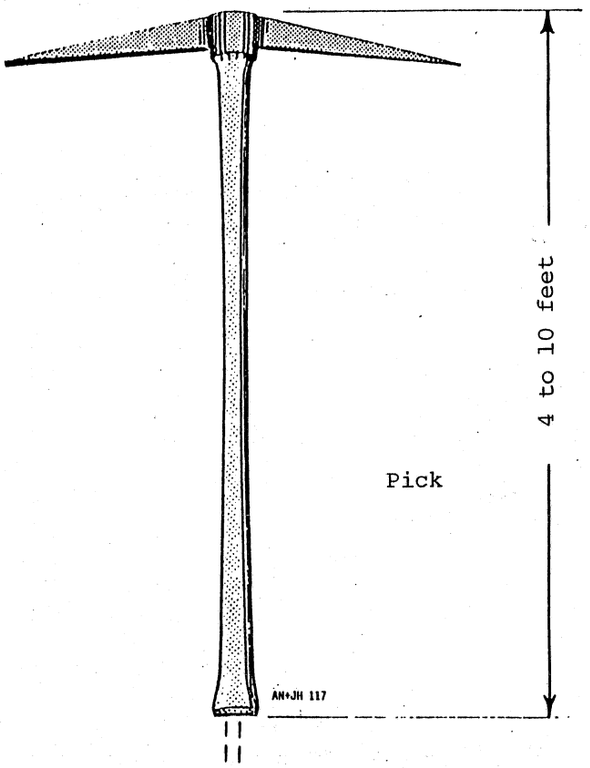

It was not common to display rugs without weather protection.
Product displays

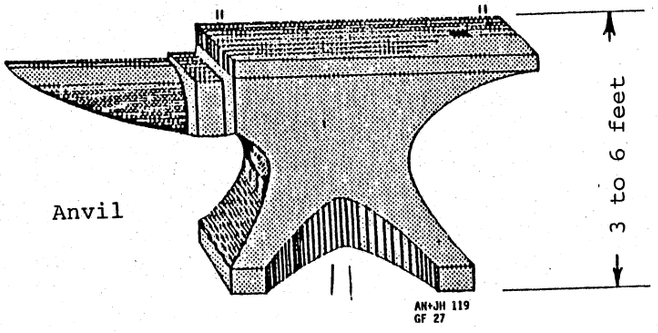
Plow, anvil, bellows, pick, millstones, padlock, hand saw, wood plane, signs with unusual or ornamental sign installation fittings--hardware store.

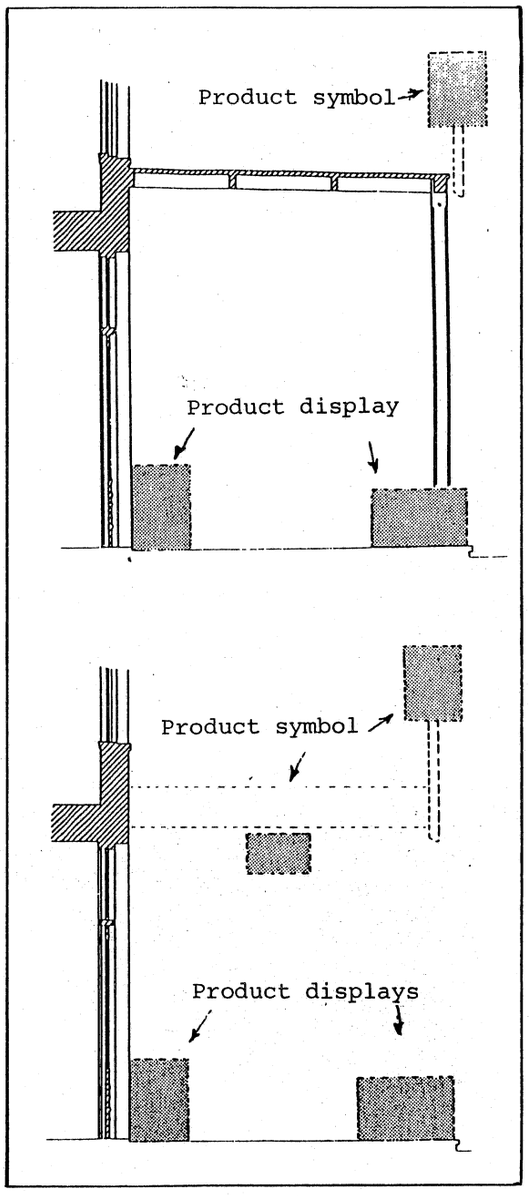


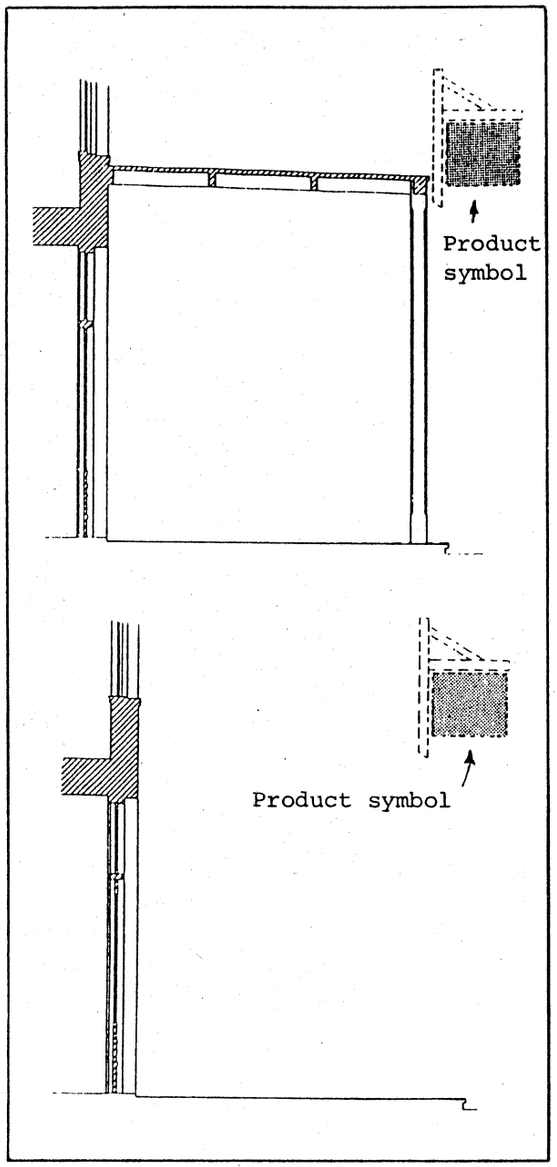




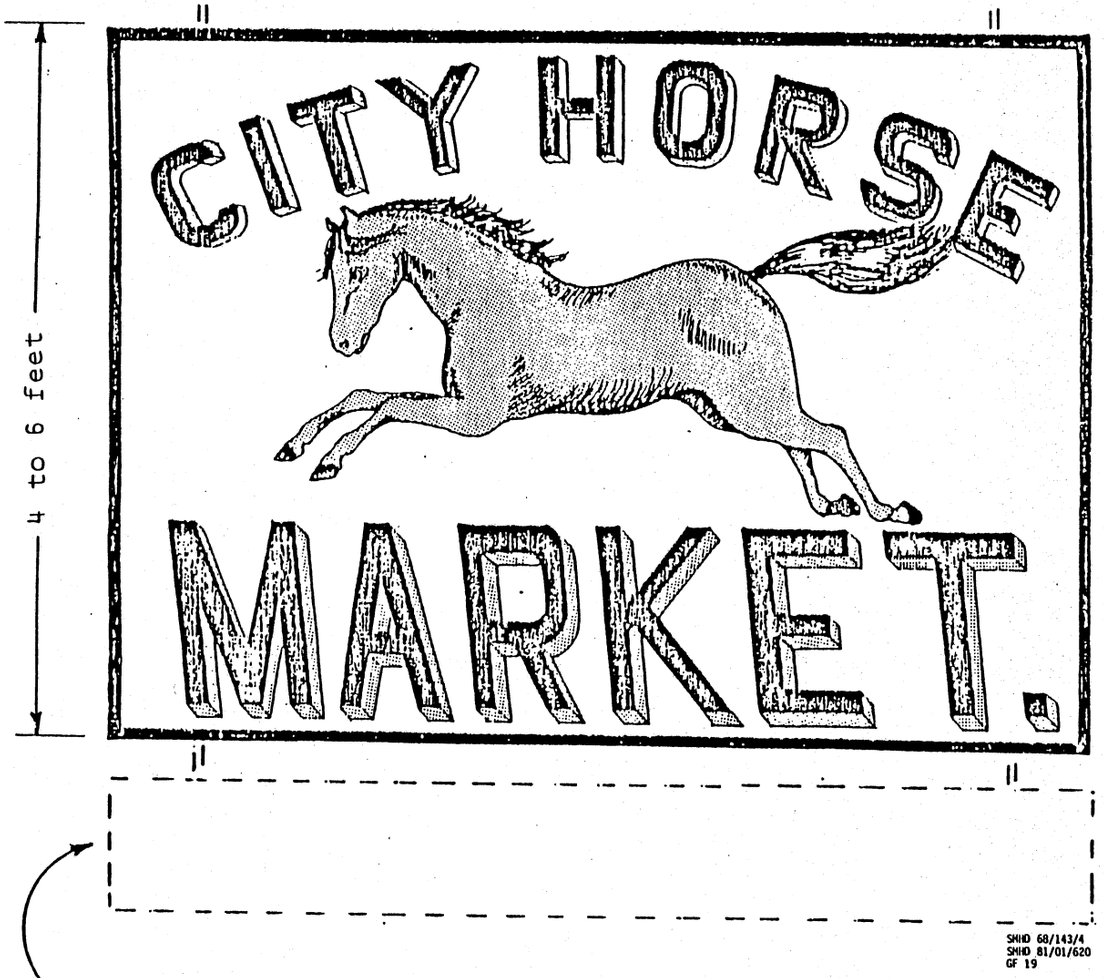

4 to 10 feet
Pick
AN+JH 117


3 to 6 feet
Anvil
AN+JH 119
GF 27


Product symbol
Product display
Product symbol
Product displays

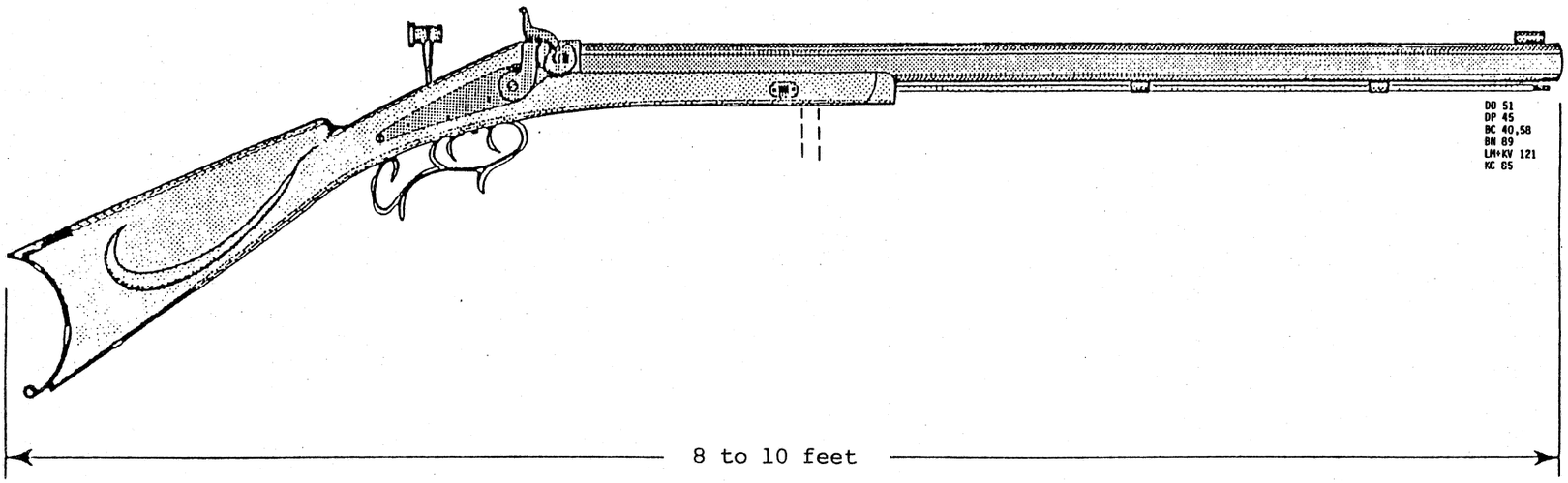


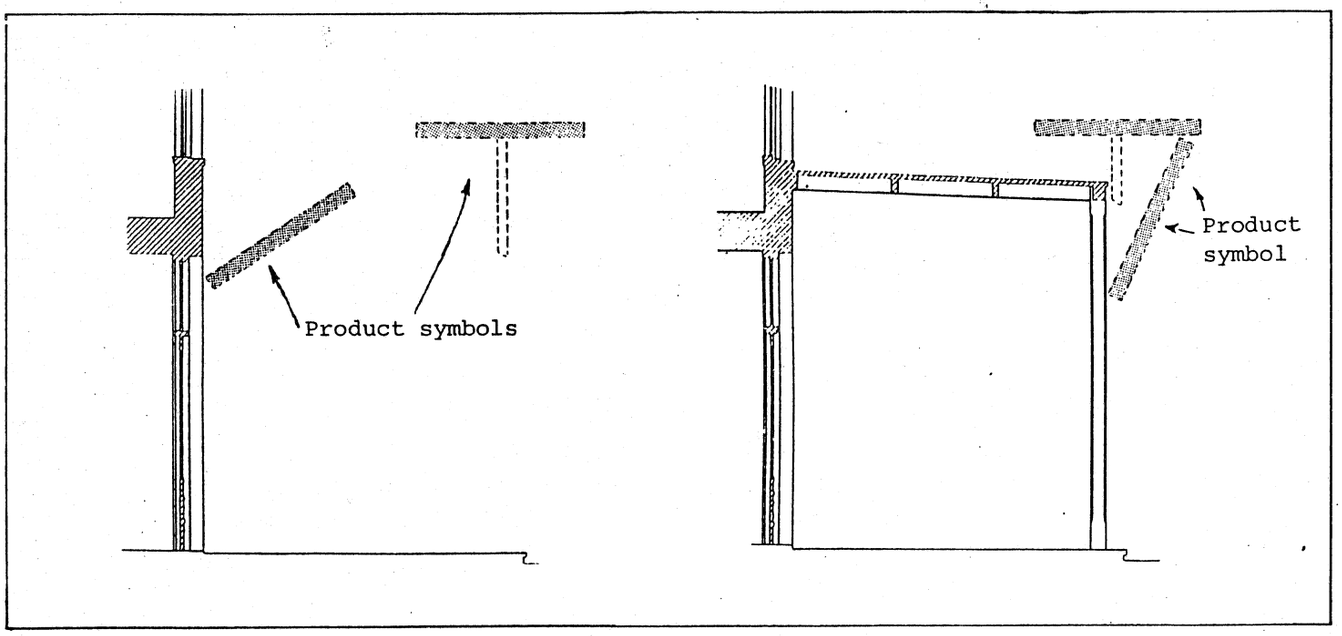
Horse (sometimes with a rider), horse collar--stable, horsemarket or blacksmith.

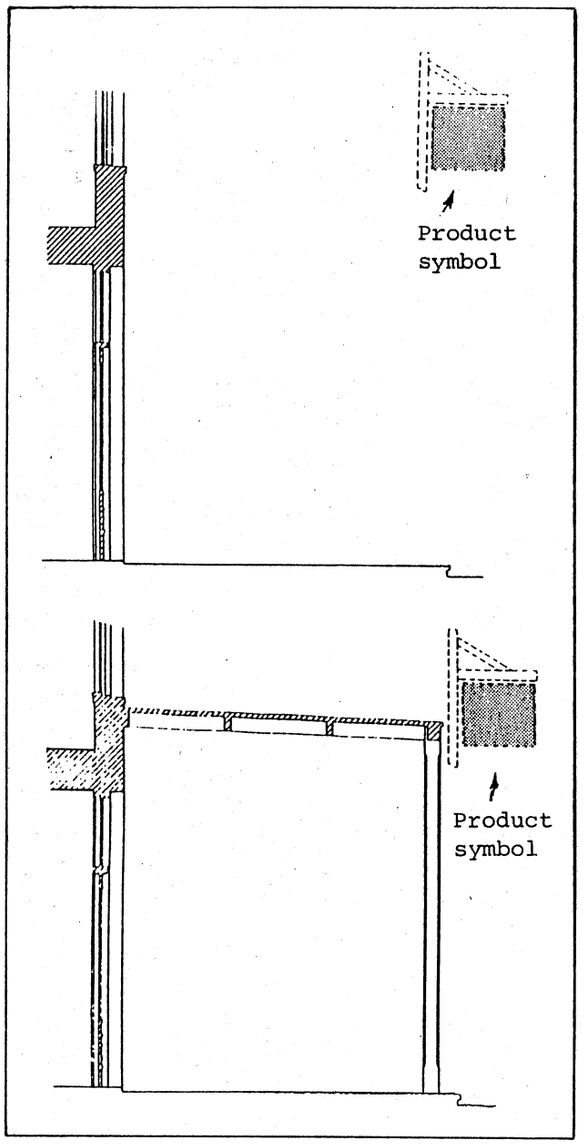


The business owner's name was often located on a separate sign suspended below the product symbol sign.

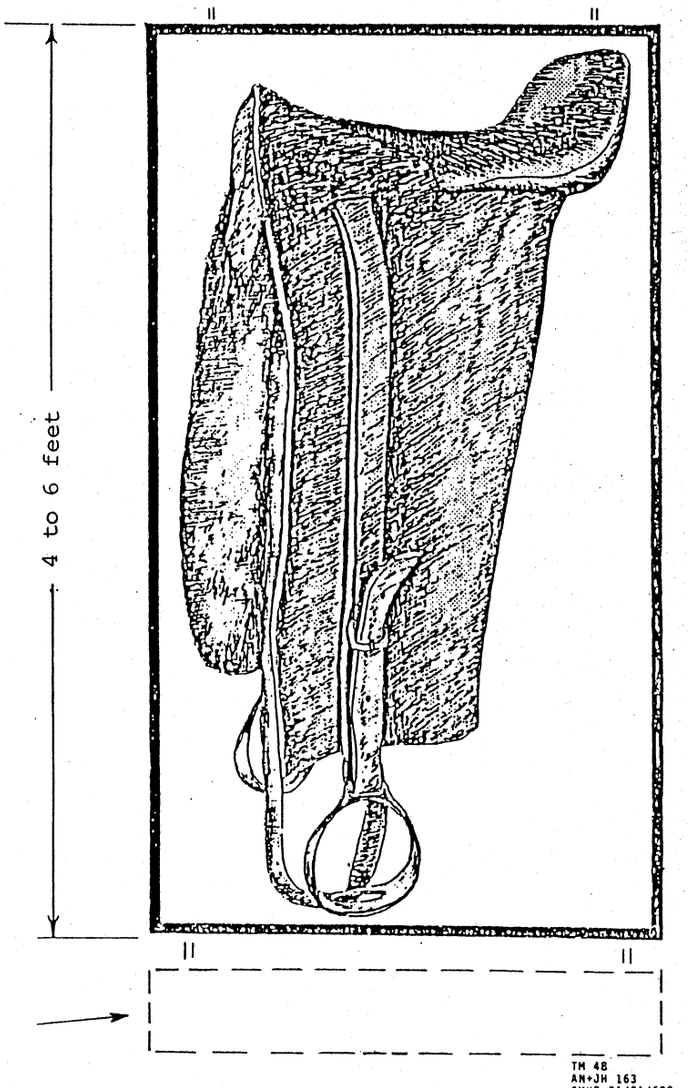
Rifle--gunsmith (sometimes a jeweler).





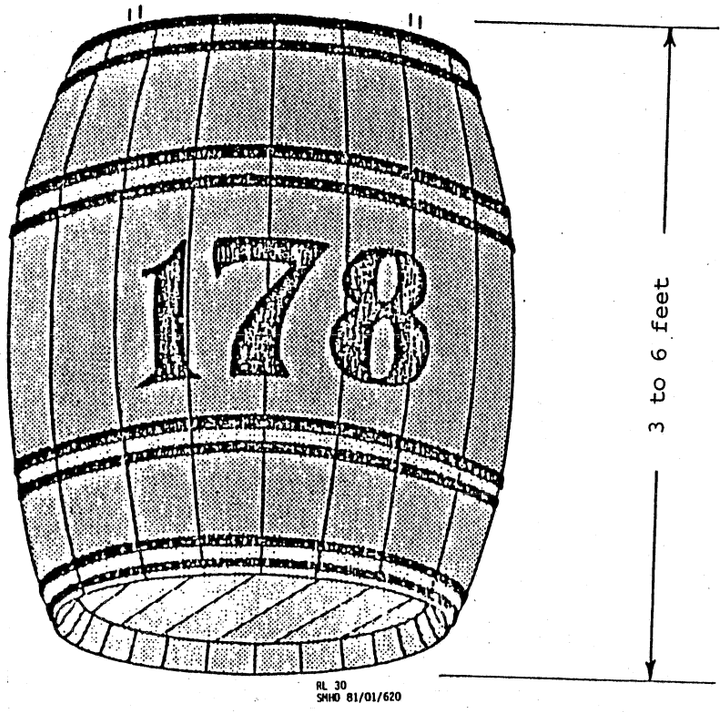


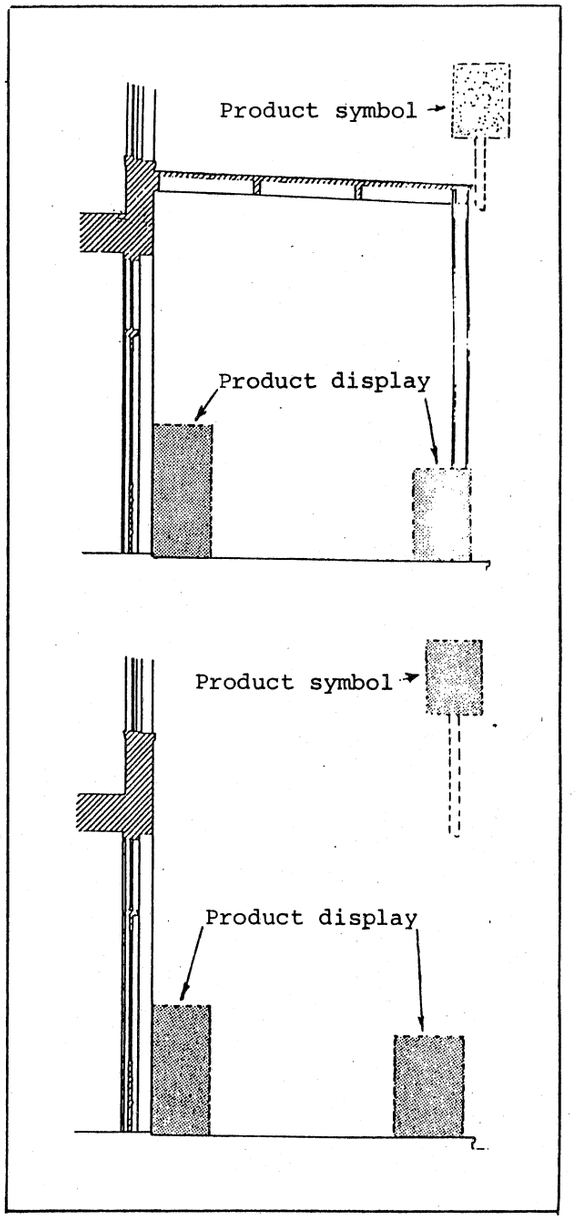
Saddle--Harness maker, saddler, tack and harness shop.

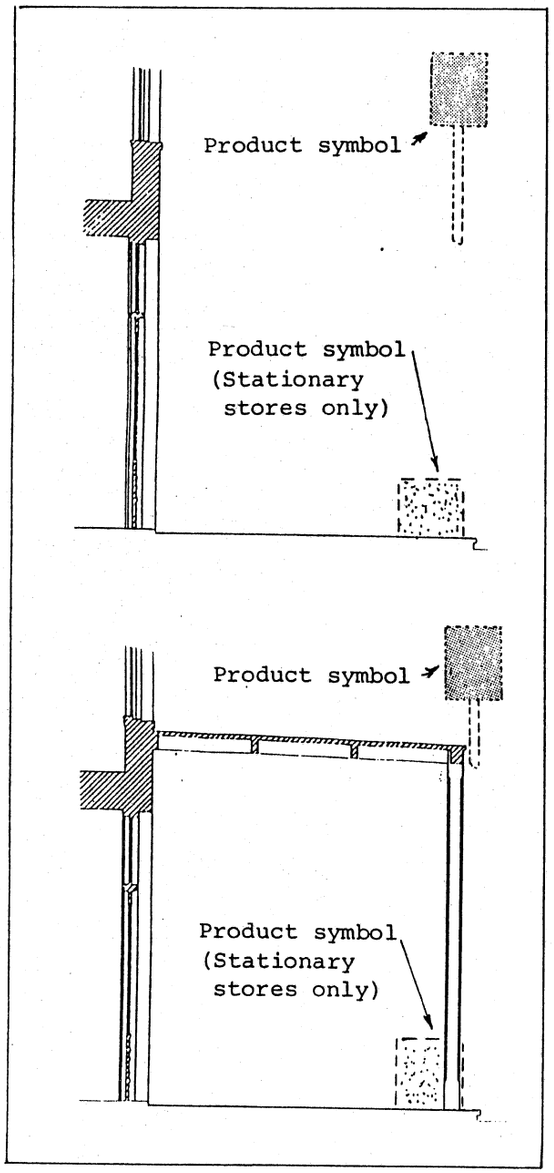


The business owner's name was often suspended below the product symbol sign.

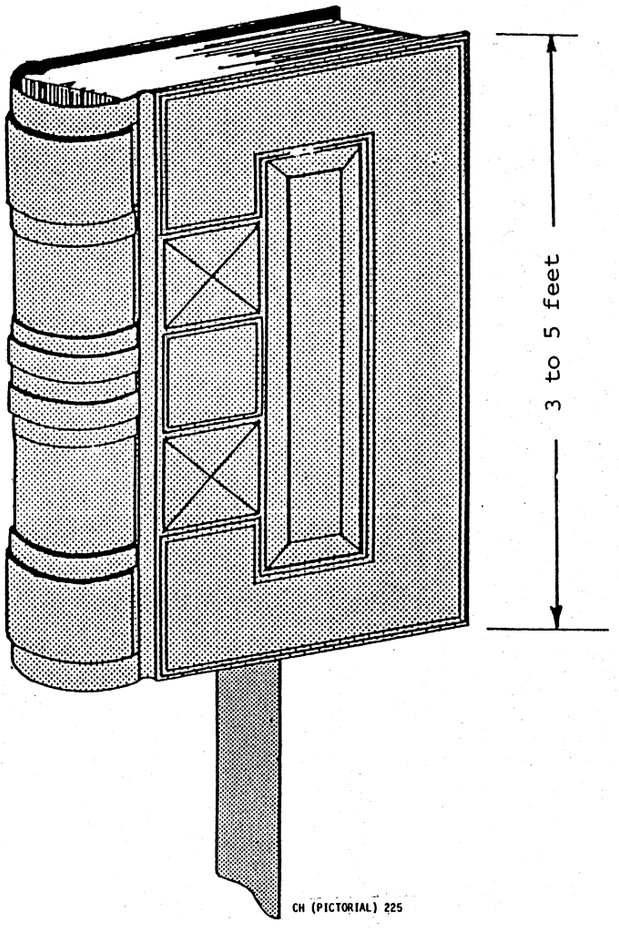
Barrel--cooper or barrel works





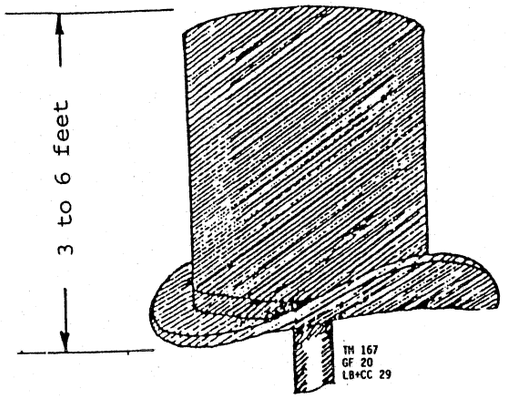


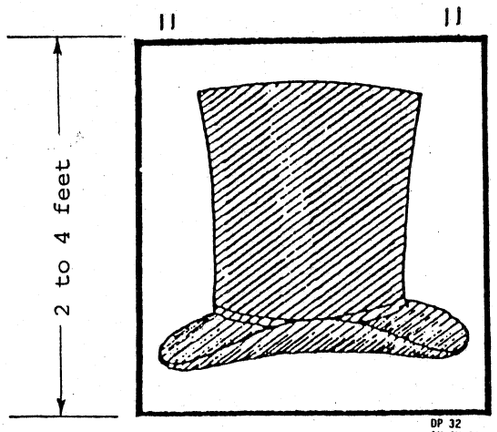
Book--book and stationary store *

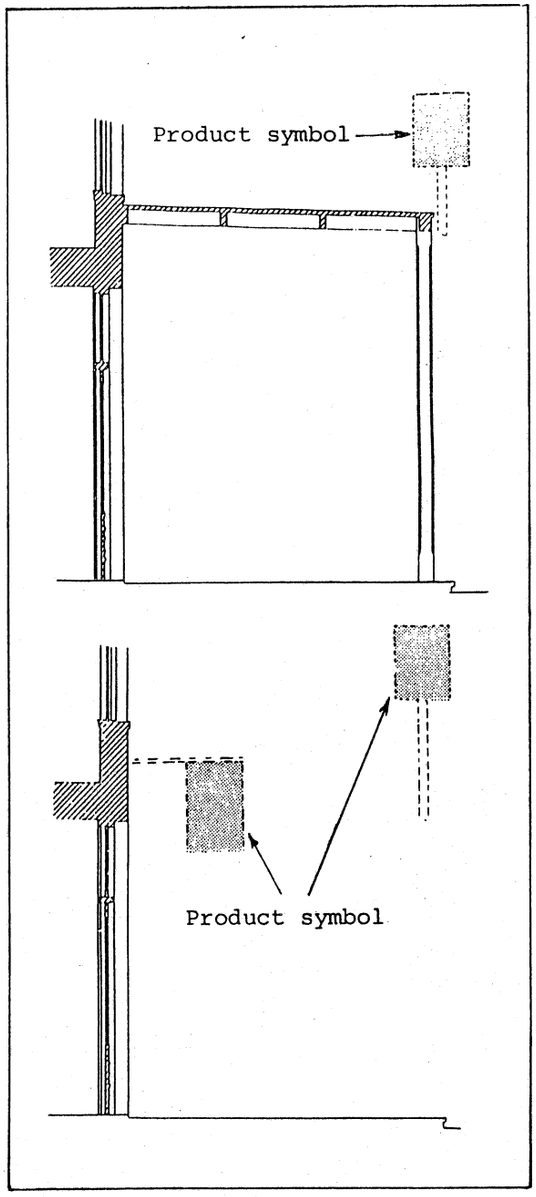


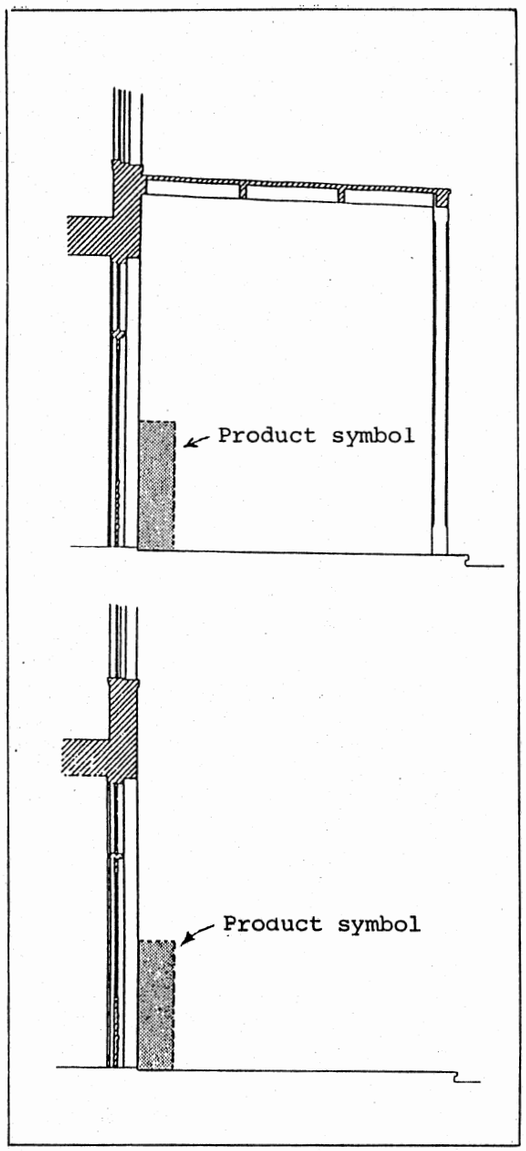
*Stationary stores occasionally used a product symbol consisting of oversized ledgers, an ink container and pen tips.

Men's top hat--hatter, tailor (fine men's clothing) haberdasher.





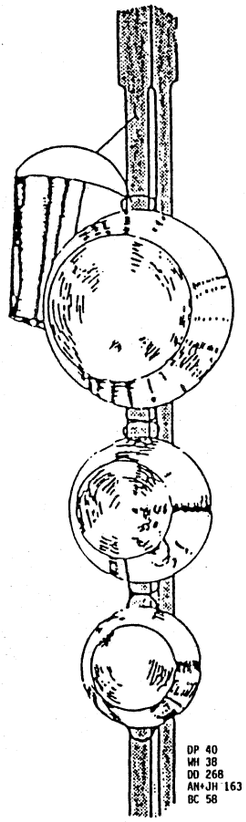


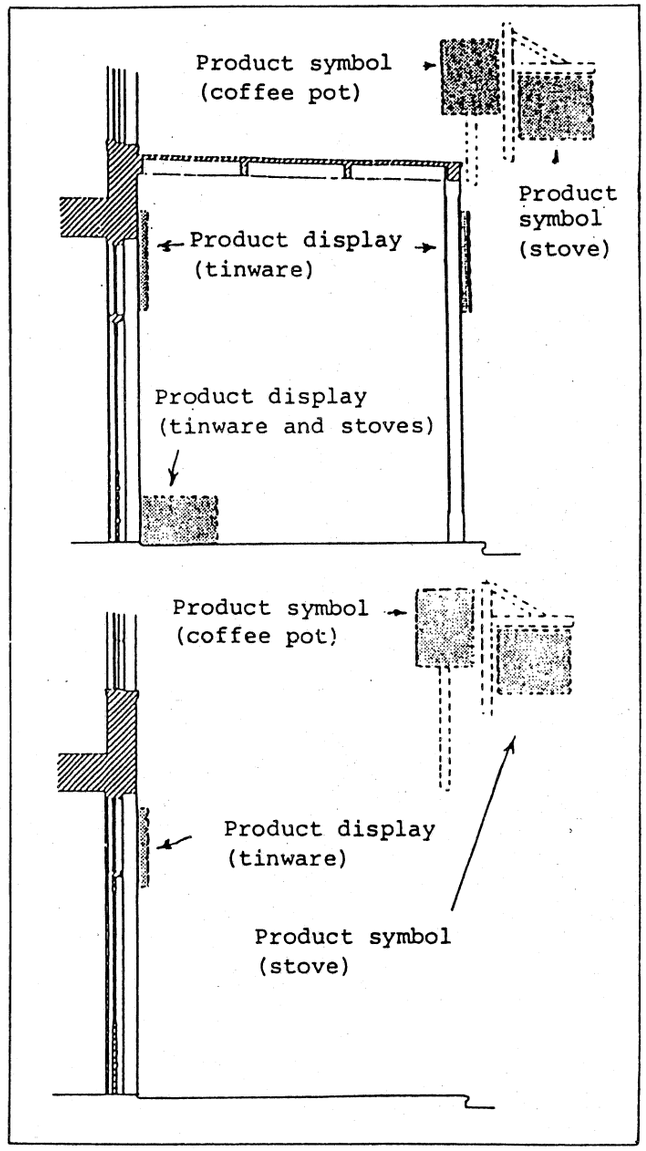


Cigars or wooden cigar store Indian* mounted on a wooden base (sometimes with casters)--cigar maker, tobacconist, tobacco products.

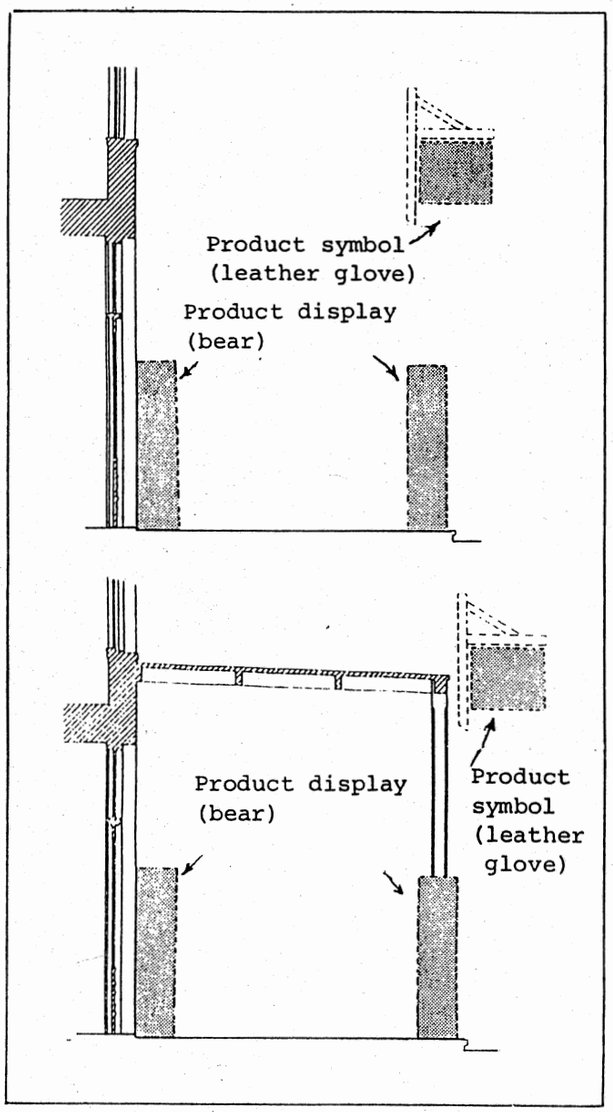
*Occasionally a punchinello character was used in lieu of the Indian.
A turkish male in native costume advertised turkish tabacco products.

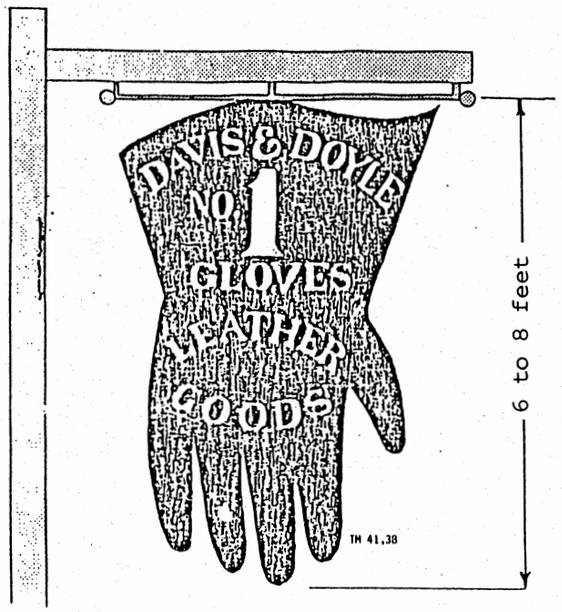
Tinware and stoves including displays of tin pots and pans, buckets and coffee pots--tinsmith, kitchenware; often associated with hardware stores.

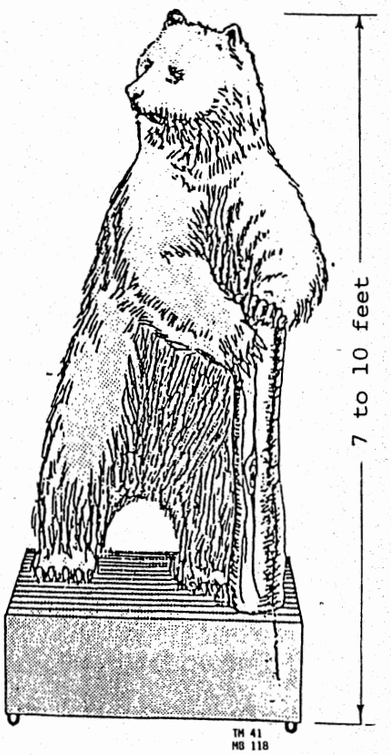




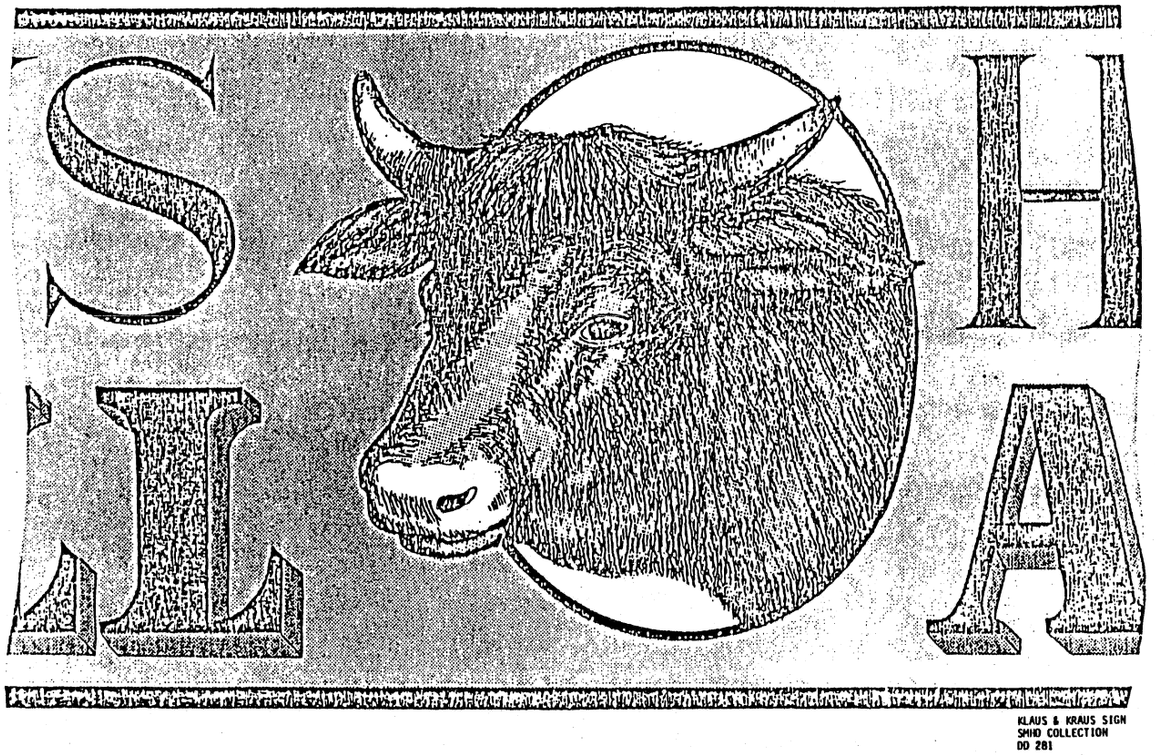
Glove, stuffed animals mounted on a wooden base (sometimes with casters)--fur or leather goods.



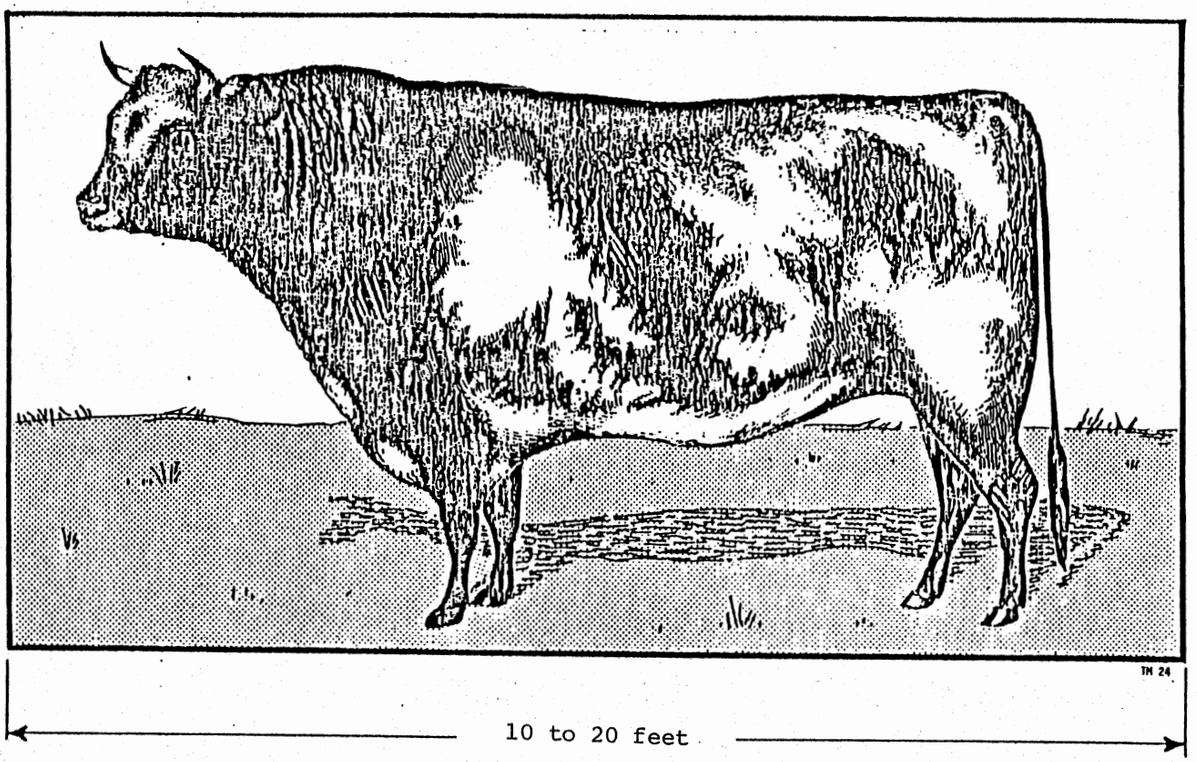


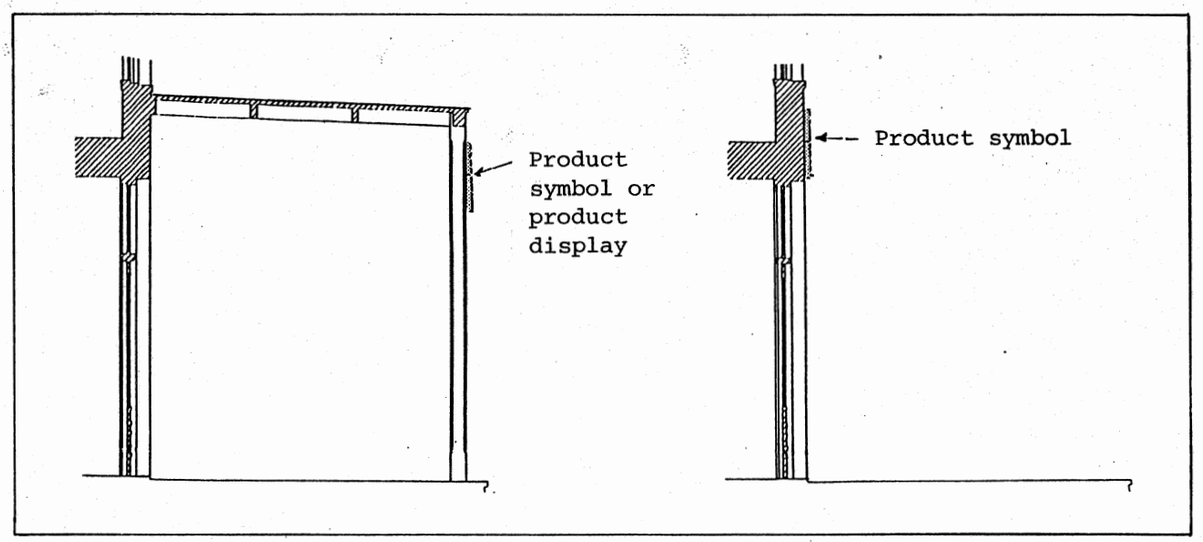


Steer (head or side view of entire animal), display of butchered meats--meat store/butcher



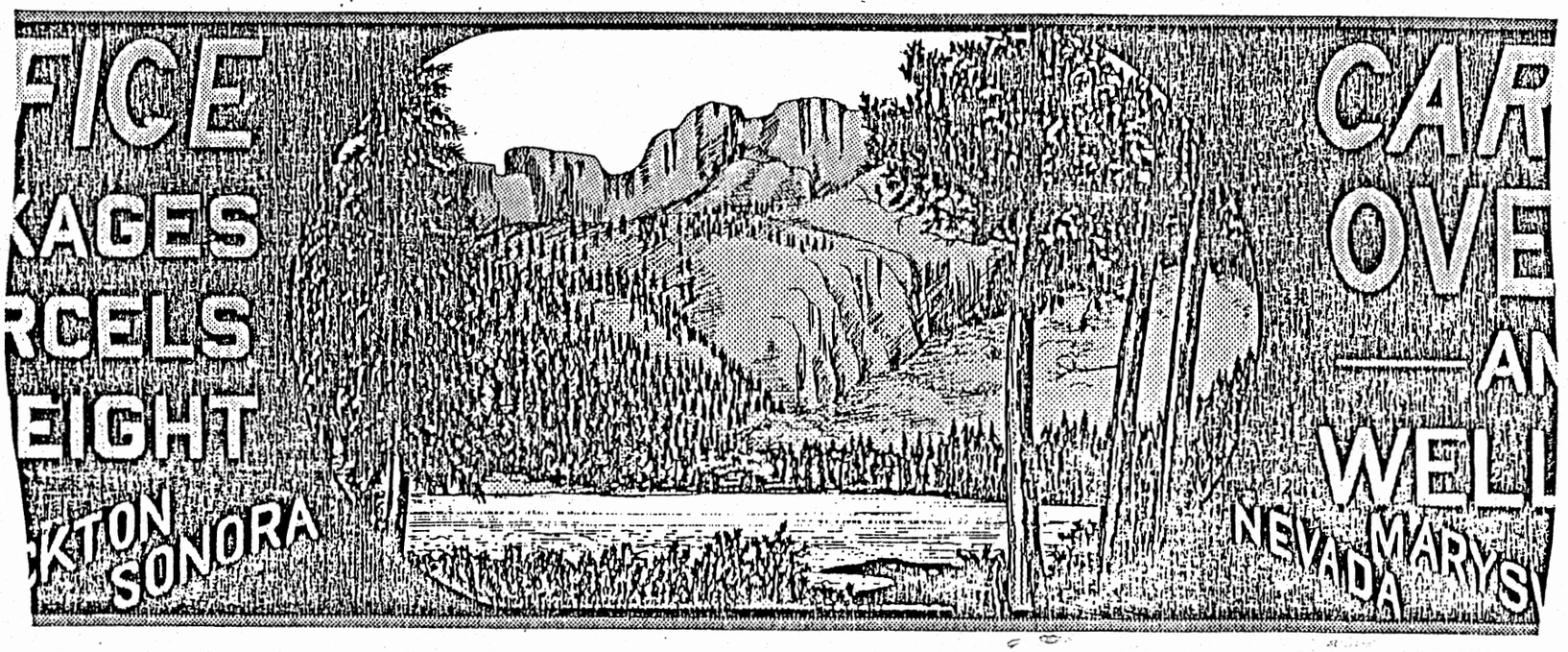
Steer head in the center of a large horizontal sign


TM 24
10 to 20 feet

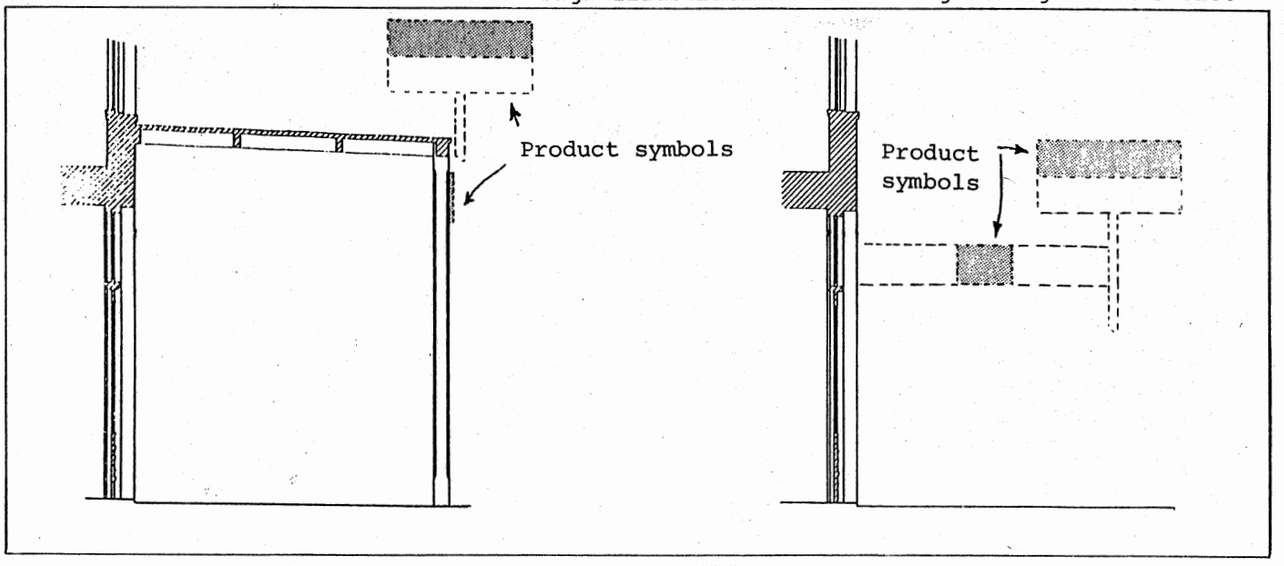

Product symbol or product display
Product symbol

Stagecoach or a painted landscape scene--stage office.

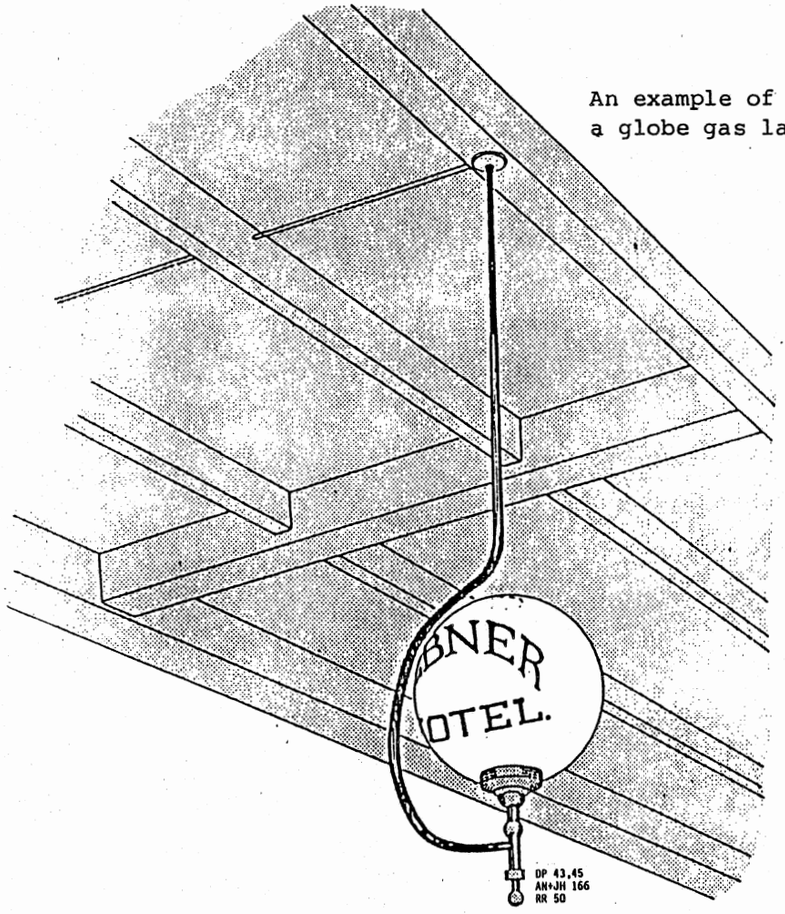
Sign painted on an unframed signboard cap



Sign illustration advertising a stagecoach office

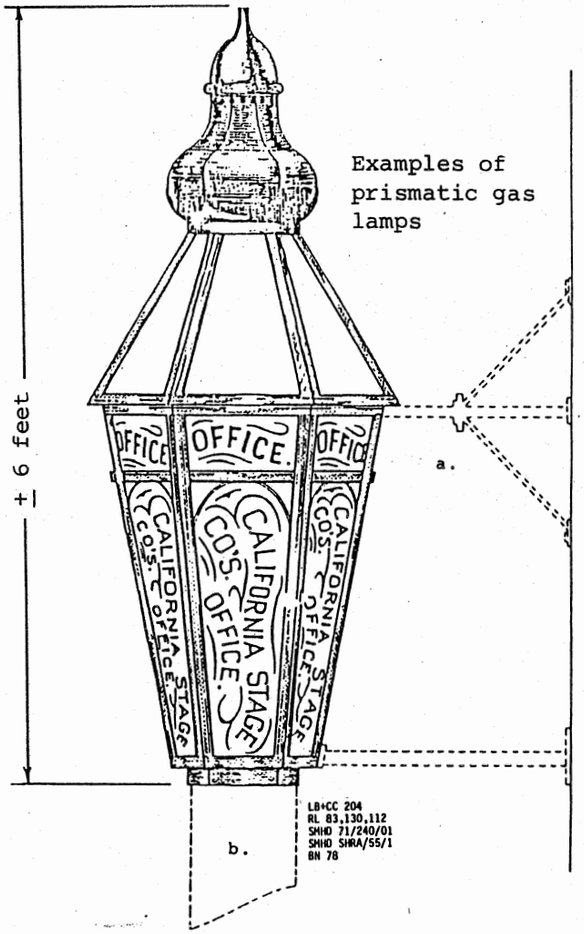


Special gas lamps--hotel, stage office, theater, saloon or billiard hall.



An example of a globe gas lamp

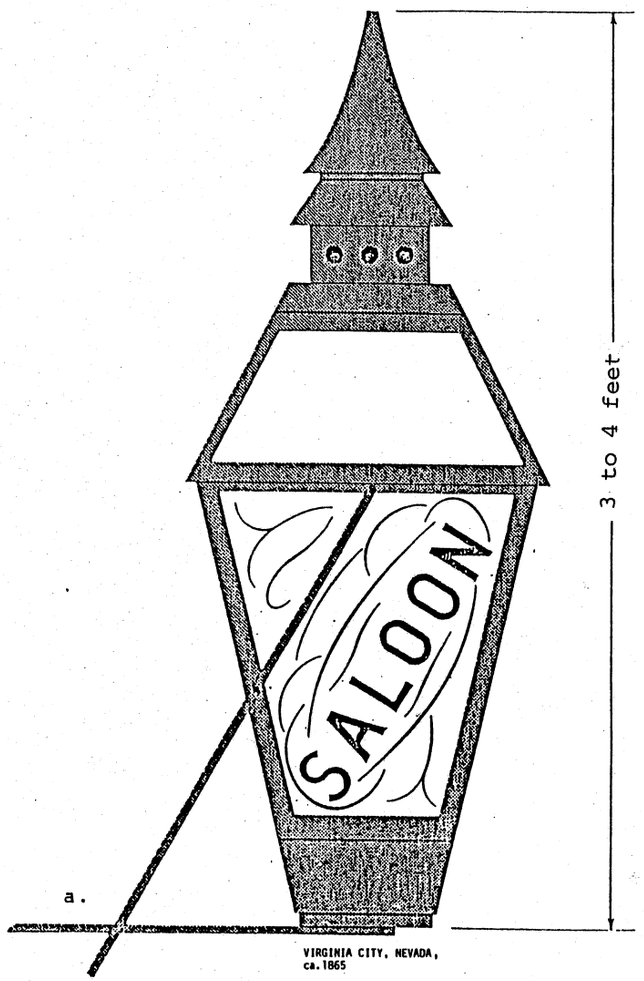
Gas lamps were either prismatic in design or circular globes. Many variations have been noted. Drum-shaped designs occurred after the Old Sacramento interpretive period.

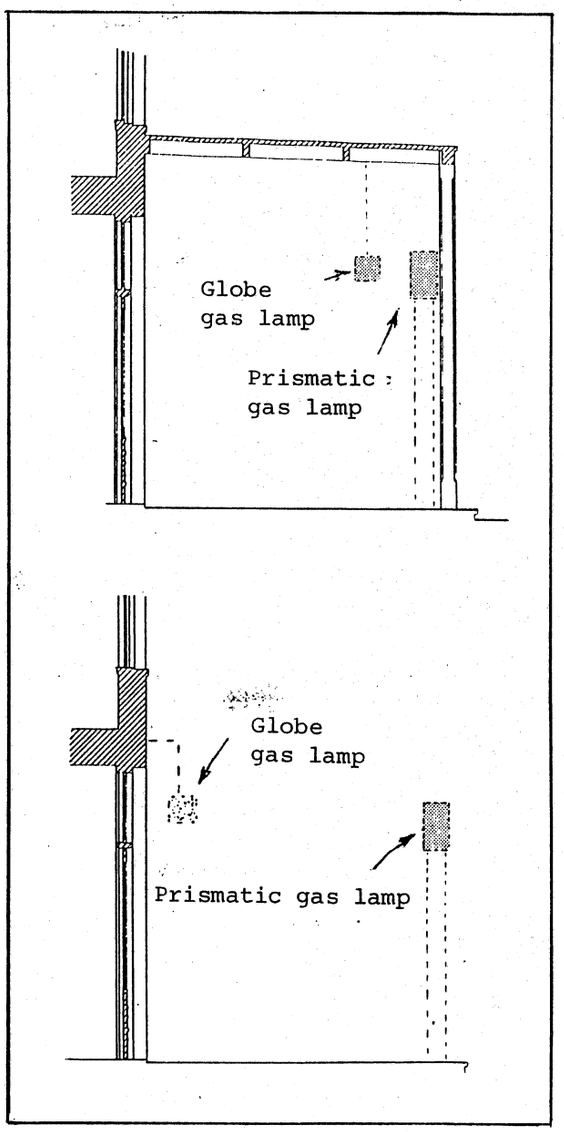


Examples of prismatic gas lamps

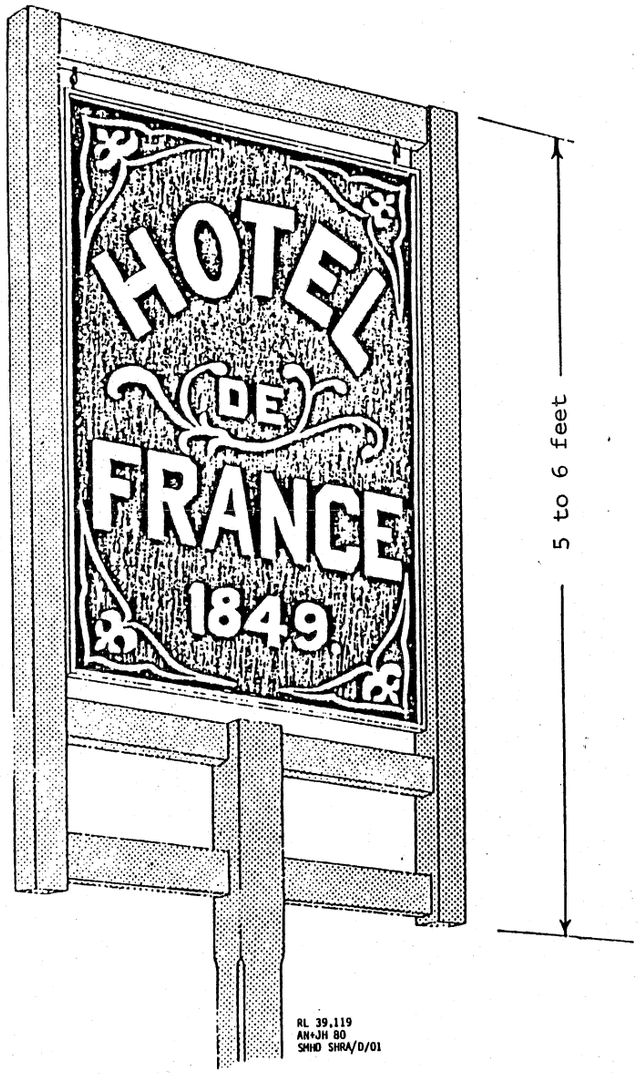
a. Wall or upper canopy column mounting hardware.

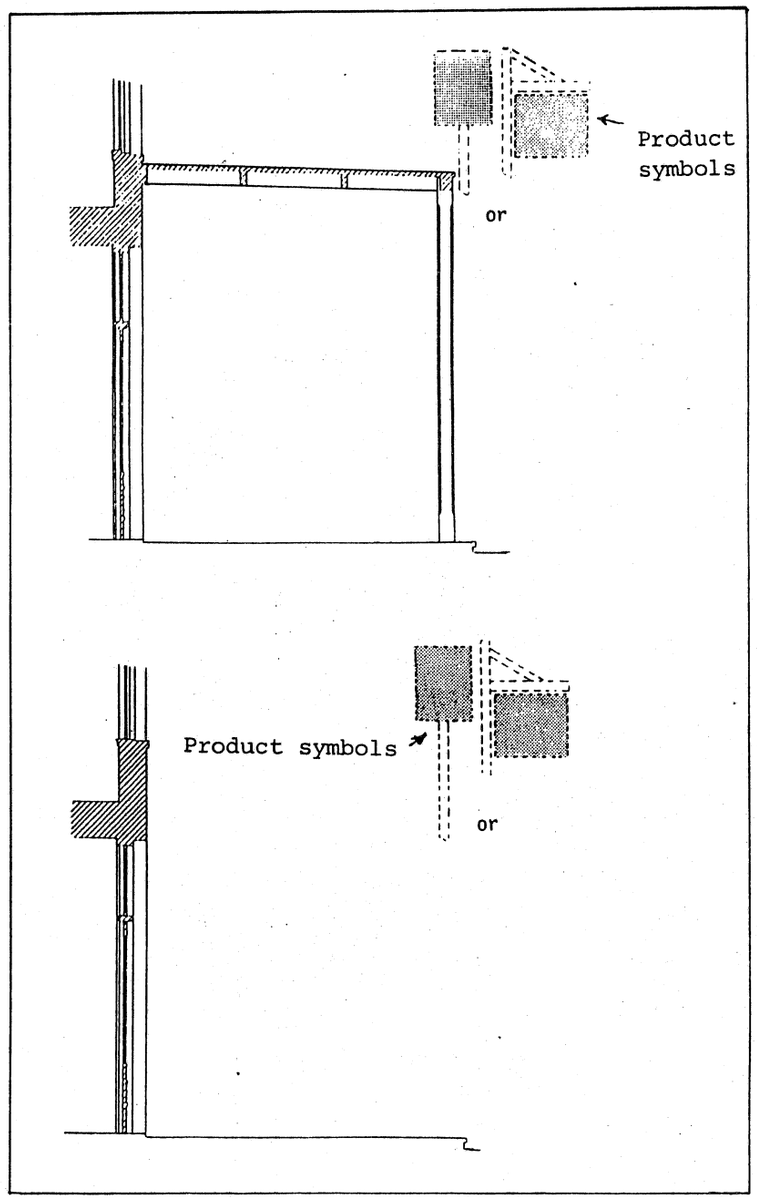
b. Pole mounted installation.

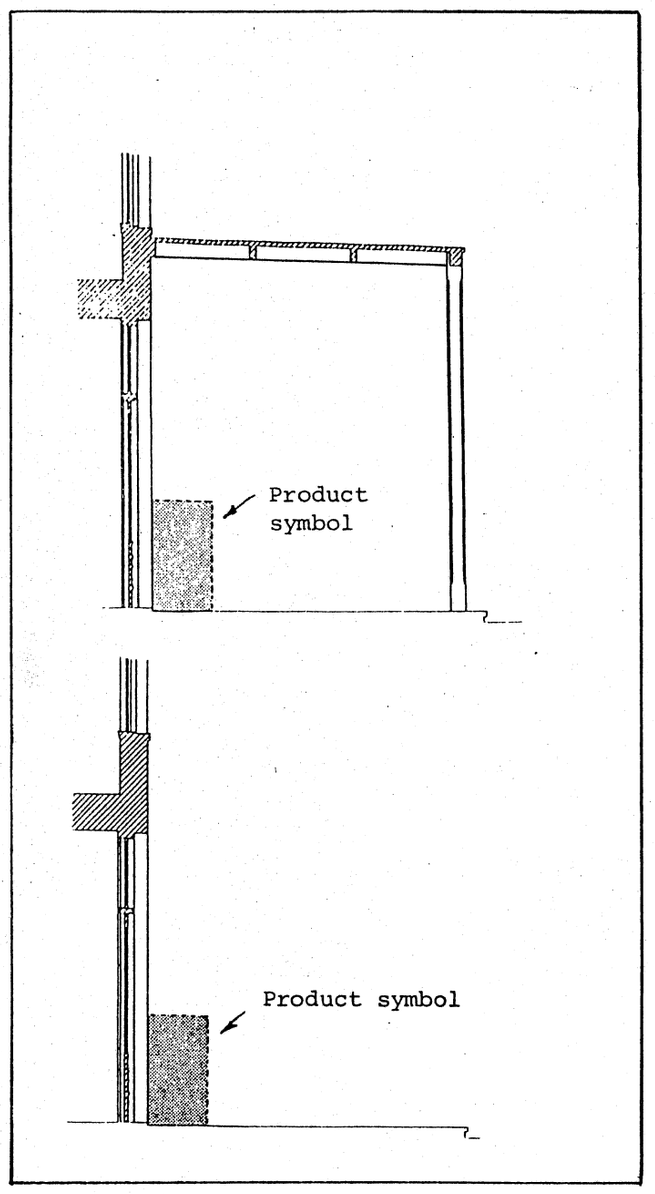

SALOON
3 to 4 feet
a.
VIRGINIA CITY, NEVADA,
ca. 1865


Globe
gas lamp
Prismatic
gas lamp
Globe
gas lamp
Prismatic gas lamp

Traditional Inn (shaped) pole mounted sign--hotel (often called houses).

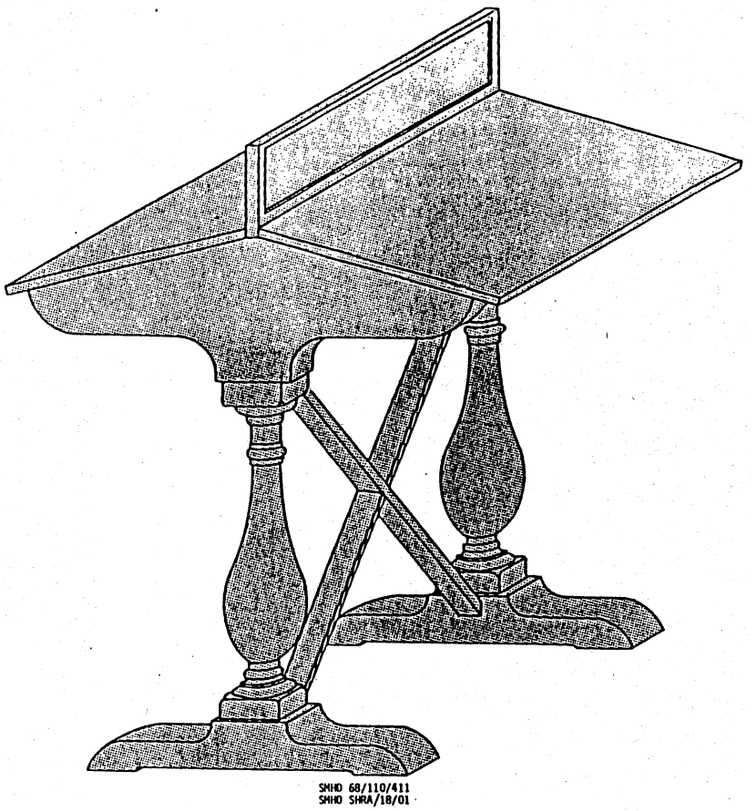




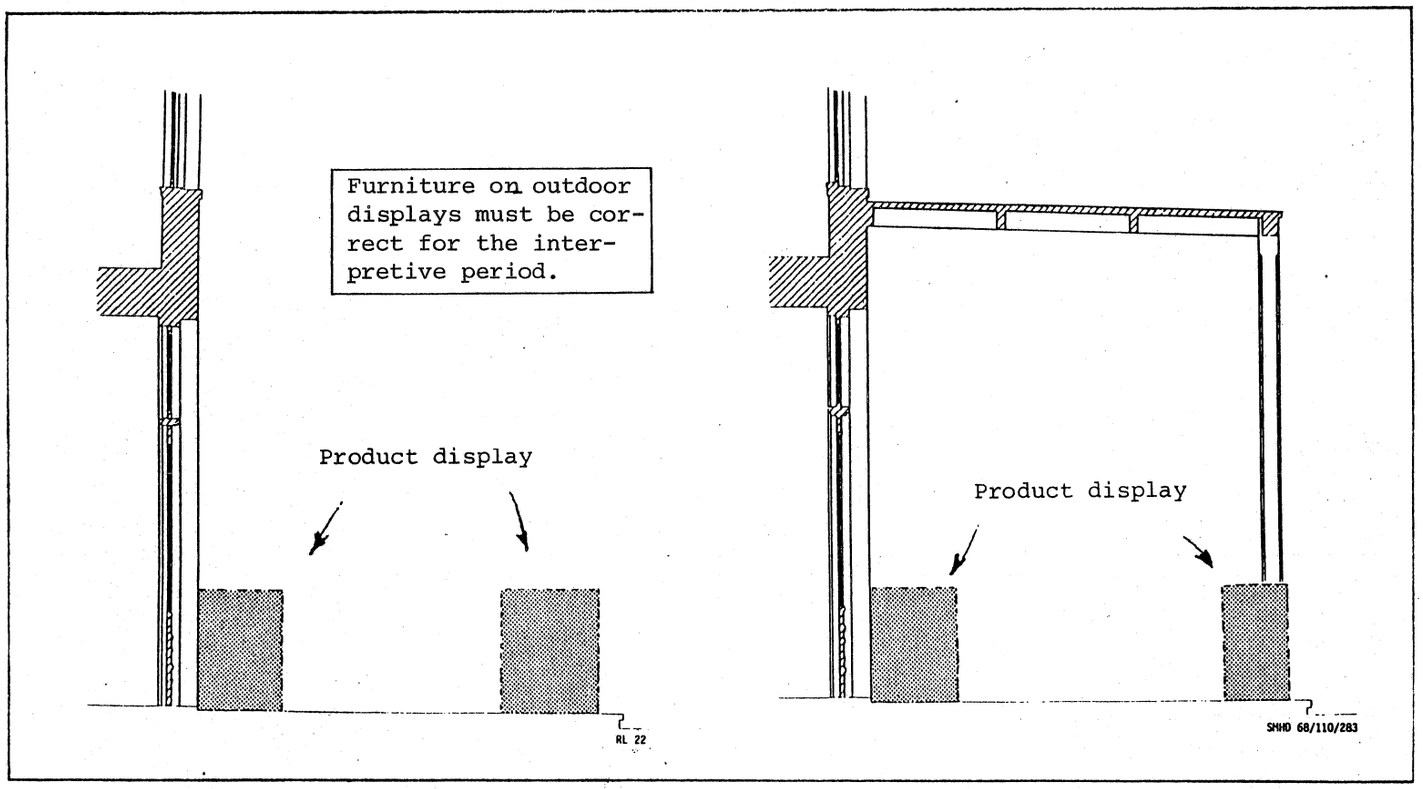


Two-sided wooden writing desk--a) Newspaper office, "intelligence office", "(job) printing"--with a display of newspapers.

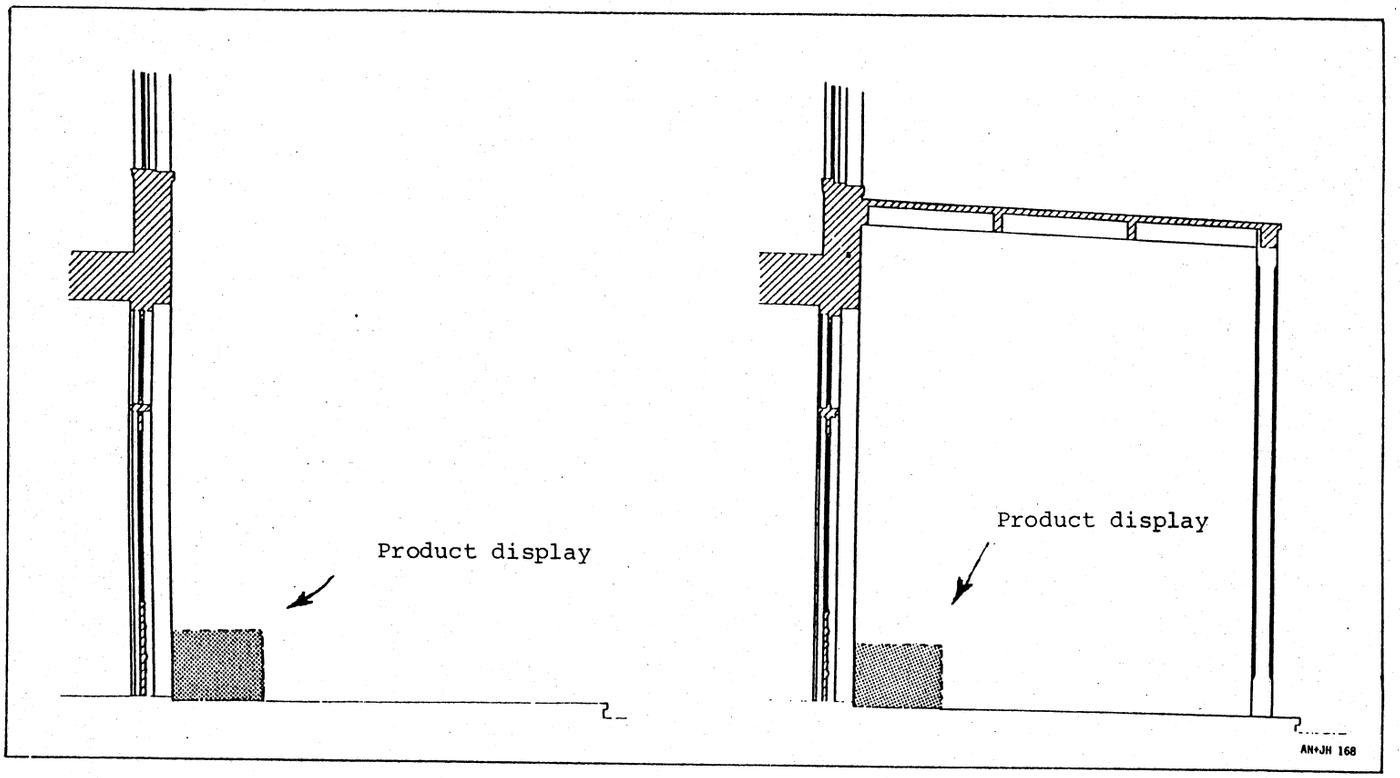
b) Post Office.



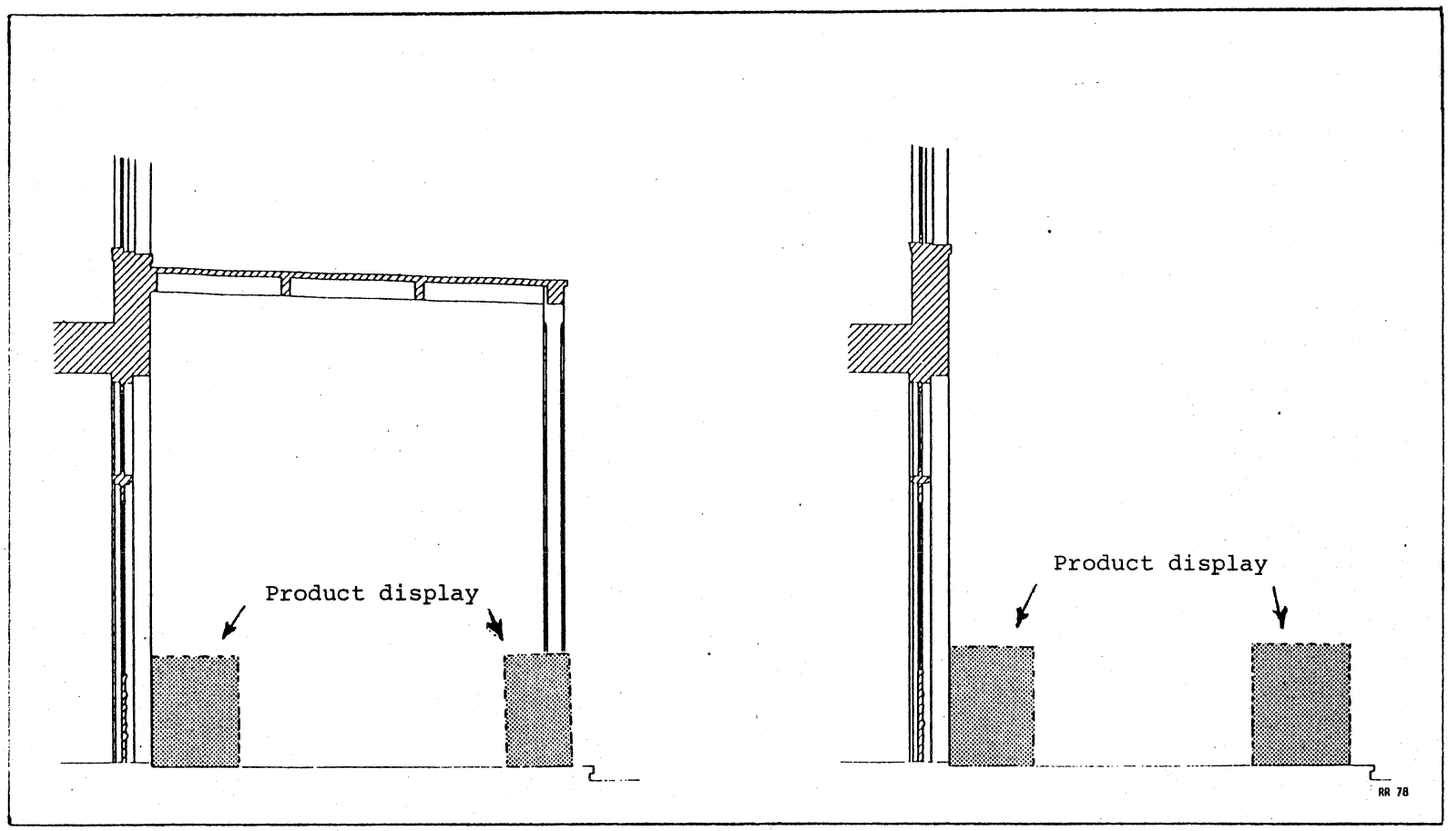
Furniture--furniture store



Display of fruits and vegetables in open wooden crates--groceries and fresh produce.



Monuments and gravestones on a sidewalk or vacant lot--stone and marble cutter, stone products.

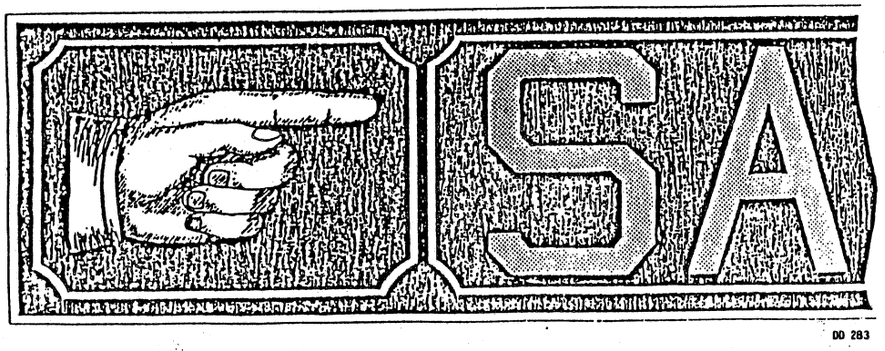


The following product symbols and displays are not illustrated:

- Whale or pig--perfumes. BN 80
- Fire helmet, hose, trumpet, ax, lantern--fire department. GF 12
- Exterior sign featuring unusual and extremely ornamental design elements--sign artist or painter. MB 69
- Deer or elk antlers attached to the top of a sign or elsewhere on a facade--common 19th Century hospitality symbol wishing good health, wealth and prosperity. A welcome sign. DP 43,45 TM 30 LM+KV 100 SMHD 81/01/620
- Permanent billboard--performing theater. RL 130,138,106,107,148 DD 297,274 GF 27 MB 153
- Sewing machine--sewing machines SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA, 1855
- Flagpole; sometimes with special flag--hotel, publicly owned structure, firehouses. In Sacramento waterfront landing markers for S.V.R.R., C.P.R.R., C.S.N.C. waterfront freight sheds and long distance ship to shore signaling; Booth building. During the Civil War years; patriotism.
- Display of blankets, bolts of cloth--dry goods. TM 171 GF 19
- Carved wood signs and ornaments--wood carver RL 283

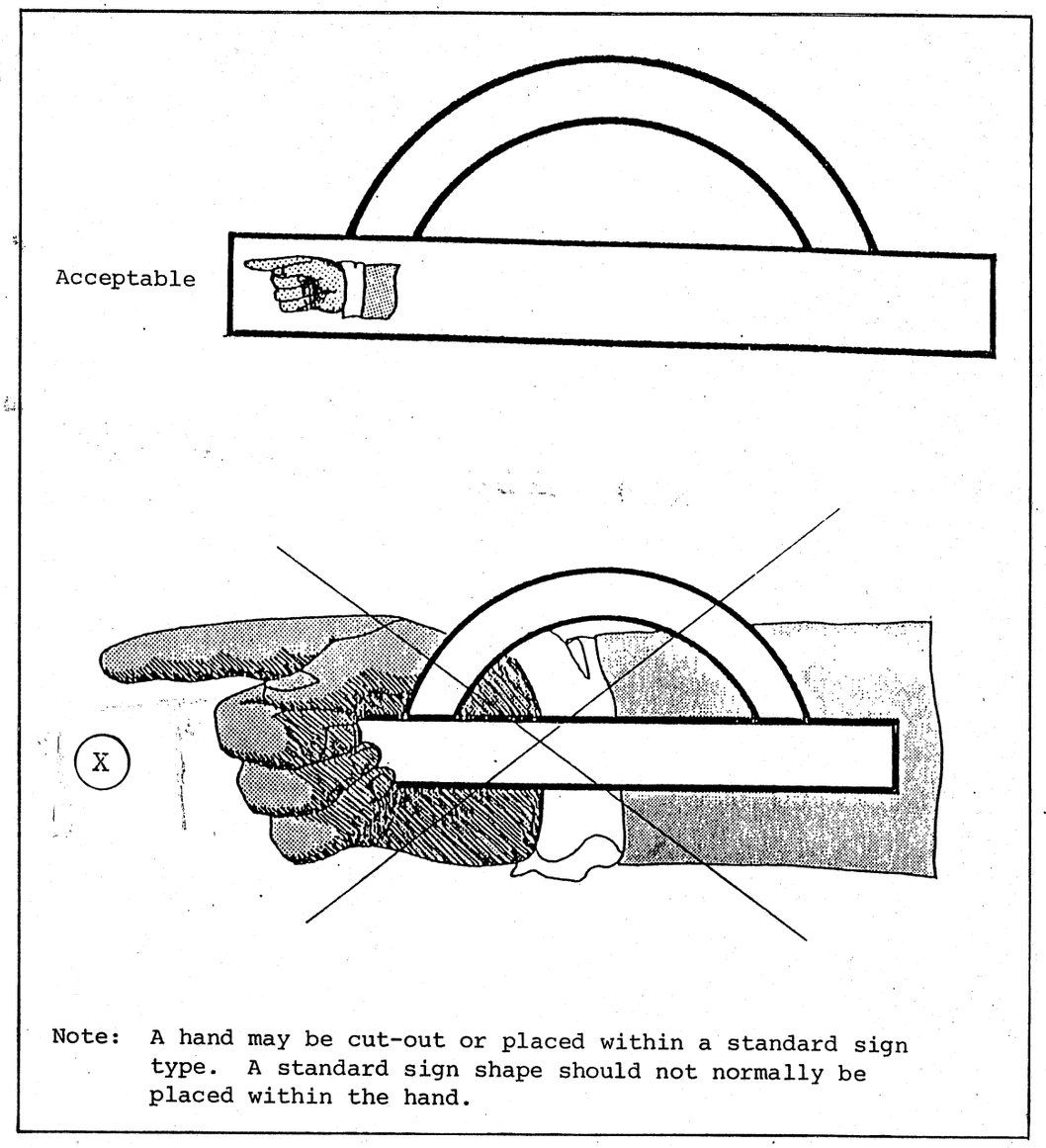
Human hand--direction indicator.

> Note: Arrows were not used as direction indicators on exterior signs.



Direction graphic image incorporated into a standard sign.

A cut-out hand located on a canopy column or post



Note: A hand may be cut-out or placed within a standard sign type. A standard sign shape should not normally be placed within the hand.

GRAPHICS SYMBOLS AND DISPLAYS OTHER THAN THOSE INDICATED IN THIS SECTION WILL NOT BE PERMITTED

C. HISTORIC SIGNS

The following section is a building by building listing of the designated Historic Signs for the Old Sacramento Historic District. All signs on this list are to be considered an unchanging element of the District. Historic signs are to be constructed and maintained by the building owner.

This list is based on the graphic record for the Historic District. A documentation date is included for each sign. It should be noted that the listed sign date relates to the availability of graphics for that particular building. In most cases, designated signs predate the documentation date for the sign. All graphics listed are in the photographic collection of the Sacramento Museum and History Division. From time to time, (20 year cycles), the list of historic signs should be updated to reflect information sources not available at the time of publication.

District Building No.	Common Name	Historic Sign Text	Documentation Date for Sign	Evidence SMHD Graphic Source
1	City Hall and Waterworks	--	--	--
17	Bennett's Masonic Hall	--	--	--
18	Sacramento Union	DAILY UNION. (2 signs)	1855	SHRA-18-0
		B.B.BARNEY & CO.	1855	SHRA-18-0
19	Magnolia Saloon	MAGNOLIA.	1852	SHRA-18-0
		MAGNOLIA. (Flag)	1856	SHRA-A-3
20	Lord's Restaurant	--	--	--
21	Haines Building	--	--	--
22	Sazerac Building and Blue Wing	--	--	--
23	Our House Saloon	--	--	--
24	Baker-Hamilton	BAKER & HAMILTON.	1880	SHRA-24-1
		BAKER & HAMILTON HARDWARE.	1880	SHRA-24-1
25	Barnum Hotel	--	--	--
26	Hall, Luhrs and Co.	HALL, LUHRS & CO.	1894	SHRA-26-1
27	Schroth Building	--	--	--
28	Foster Saloon	--	--	--
31	Mechanics' Exchange Hotel	MECHANICS' EXCHANGE.	ca.1860's	SHRA-31-1
32	Vernon-Brannan House	BRANNAN HOUSE. (West Wall)	1865	SHRA-32-1

33	Brannan Building	--	--	--
34	Brannan Building	--	--	--
35	Booth Building	BOOTH & CO.	1880	SHRA-35-1
36	Booth Building	BOOTH & CO. WHOLESALE GROCERS. (North Wall)	1869	SHRA-E-1
		BOOTH & CO.	1865	SHRA-35-1
		BOOTH & CO.	ca. 1870	SHRA-35-1
36A	Booth Building	BOOTH & CO.	ca. 1875	SHRA-35-1
		G.W.CHESLEY & CO. WHOLESALE GROCERS & IMPORTERS OF WINES AND LIQUORS.	1880	SHRA-35-1
37	Leggett Ale House	UNITED STATES. (South Wall)	1869	SHRA-122-3
38	United States Hotel	CALIFORNIA COMBINATION.	1856	SHRA-A-3
		STAGE OFFICE.	1856	SHRA-A-3
		Gas Lamp product symbol	1856	SHRA-A-3 SHRA-D-3
39	New York Drug Store	Mortar and pestal product symbol	1859	SHRA-D-3
40	Boyd & Davis	CIGAR & TOBACCO DEPOT.	1869	71-240-1
		WASHING & IRONING.	1869	71-240-1
41	Howard House	HATS, CLOTHING, BOOTS & SHOES. CALVYN. (West wall)	1869	SHRA-35-3 67-98-135
		HOWARD HOUSE.	1869	71-240-1
		9 KOHN & BRO. 11	1869	71-240-1

42	Lady Adams Building	"LADY ADAMS" CO.	1866	68-110-137 71-240-1
43	Harris-Winkle Buildings	BEANS OF ALL KINDS PRODUCE, ONIONS & POTATOES	1866	68-110-137 71-240-1
		C. SHAEFFER. COOPER.	ca 1874	prototyped (necessary to conceal mechanical equipment)
		23 BAY STATE 23 CHOP & OYSTER HOUSE.	ca 1871	prototyped (necessary to conceal mechanical equipment)
45	Union Hotel annex	--	--	--
46	Bank Exchange building	--	--	--
47	Union Hotel	UNION HOTEL * *	1857 2 stars added 1880's	SHRA-A-4 SHRA-47-1a SHRA-47-2 SHRA-47-2a SHRA-47-3
		UNION HOTEL (flag)	1856	SHRA-47-3
48	Orleans Hotel	ORLEANS HOTEL.	1857	SHRA-A-4 SHRA-B-5
		ORLEANS. (2 signs on rear)	1856	SHRA-A-3
		ORLEANS HOTEL. (flag)	1856	SHRA-A-3
49	Adams Express Building	ADAMS & CO. EXPRESS & BANKING HOUSE.	1855	SHRA-49-2 SHRA-A-4 SHRA-B-5
		ALTA TELEGRAPH CO.	1855	same as above
		CAL. STATE TELEGRAPH CO.	1855	same as above
		ADAMS & CO.	1855	same as above
		ADAMS & CO. [EXPRESS] (flag)	1854 [1856]	SHRA-49-2 [SHRA-B-5]

50	Arcade Hotel	ARCADE.	1875	68-110-235
52	Gregory-Barnes Building	GREGORY BARNES & CO.	1875	68-110-209
		128 POTATOES, VEGETABLES GREEN & DRIED FRUITS, BEANS, HONEY, EGGS BUTTER, CHEESE, ALFALFA SEED, POULTRY & c.	1875	68-110-209
53	Pioneer Hall & Bakery	--	--	--
54	City Market	--	--	--
55	What Cheer House	BAILY'S.	1859	82 -83-04
		WHAT CHEER HOUSE. (2 signs)	1859	82-83-04 SHRA-55-1 SHRA-55-2 SHRA-55-5
		CAL. OREGON STAGE OFFICE.	1869	71-240-1
56	King, Barrol & Co.	10 A.LEVY 10 WHAT CHEER CLOTHING STORE.	1869	71-240-1
58	National Hotel	NATIONAL HOUSE. Boot product symbol	1856 1869	SHRA-A-3 71-240-1
59	Winkle Bakery	--	--	--
60	Stevens, Chesley & Co.	STORAGE.	1856	SHRA-A-3 SHRA-55-5
		STEVEN, CHESLEY & CO.	1856	same as above
61	Hill, Clark & Co.	HILL, CLARK & CO. IMPORTERS AND JOBBRS.(sic)	1856	same as above
		HILL, CLARK & CO.	1856	SHRA-55-5
62	Lambard Flour Mill	FLOUR MILL.	1856	SHRA-A-3

63	Sacramento Cracker Co.	--	--	--
64	Sacramento Cracker Co.	--	--	--
65	Sacramento Cracker Co.	--	--	--
66	Brooklyn Hotel.	BROOKLYN HOTEL.	1875	73-265-2
67	Cline & Co.	--	--	--
68	Strouss & Co.	--	--	--
69	Eagle Mills	--	--	--
70	Adams McNeil & Co.	ADAMS McNEIL & CO. WHOLESALE GROCERS. AGENTS CAL. POWDER WORKS.	1869	SHRA-E-6 SHRA-E-4 SHRA-70-1 SHRA-70-2
		ADAMS, McNEIL & CO. (3 signs)	1869	SHRA-122-3 SHRA-70-1 73-265-2
		AGENCY FOR CALIFORNIA POWDER WORKS AND QUICKSILVER. (2 signs)	1869	SHRA-70-1 80-165-01
72	W.F. Brown Hotel	--	--	--
73	Clarendon Hotel	CLARENDON.	1857	SHRA-A-4
74	Pacific Stables	PACIFIC STABLE(S).	1857	SHRA-A-4 SHRA-74-2 SHRA-74-3
		H.R.COVEY & CO.	1857	SHRA-A-4
75	Skaggs Building	--	--	--
76	Skaggs Building	--	--	--
77	Sacramento Engine Co. No. 3	SACRAMENTO NO. 3	1855	79-93-05a SHRA-77-1
		No. 3 (flag)	1856	SHRA-A-3

78	Goodell's Carpenter Shop	--	--	--
79A	Rivett-Fuller Building	FULLER & HEATHER. IMPORTERS PAINTS OILS, GLASS & C.	1869	68-126-27
79	Rivett-Fuller building	--	--	--
80	Democratic State Journal	JOB PRINTING.	ca 1855	SHRA-B-5
		C.S M.....(?)	ca 1855	SHRA-B-5
81	Pendergast Store	--	--	--
83	Empire House	EMPIRE HOUSE.	ca 1875	SHRA-H-2 SHRA-79-2 SHRA-84-1b 70-207-33
84	Ebner's Hotel	EBNER'S. (West wall)	1862	SHRA-55-1 SHRA-55-2 SHRA-55-6 SHRA-84-1
		EBNER'S HOTEL.	ca 1860's	SHRA-84-0 SHRA-84-1 SHRA-84-1a SHRA-84-1b SHRA-79-2 70-207-33
85	Stanford Brothers Warehouse	STANFORD BROS. (2 signs)	1857	SHRA-A-4
		97 CHAS. C. KNOX. 97 STORAGE & COMMISSION MERCHANT.	1869	80-165-01
86	Cavert Building	--	--	--
95	Latcher Building	--	--	--
96	Cornwall Building	--	--	--

97	Frey Building	--	--	--
98	Fratt Building	--	--	--
103	Jessup	--	--	--
104	Alrich Building	--	--	--
105	Rodgers Building	--	--	--
106	Cienfuego Building	--	--	--
107	Still, Conner & Co.	--	--	--
108	Pioneer Telegraph Building	--	--	--
109	Smith Building	--	--	--
110	Heywood building	HEYWOOD'S BUILDING. (2 signs)	1857	SHRA-A-4
113	E.P. Figg Building	--	--	--
115	Rialto Building	--	--	--
118	Morse Building	--	--	--
119	St. Charles Store	VANCE'S DAGUERREAN ROOMS.	1852	SHRA-118-1 SHRA-120-1 68-110-395
120	Carpenter Building	LIQUORS, GROCERIES, PROVISIONS.	1852	SHRA-118-1 SHRA-120-1 68-110-395
		J. G. MORRISON JR & CO.	1852	same as above
121	Saddle Rock Restaurant	T. H. BORDEN.	1852	68-110-395 SHRA-118-1
		BOOK SELLER.	1852	same as above
		St. CHARLES.	1852	same as above

122	Fashion Saloon	--	--	--
123	Diana Saloon	LAMOTT HATTER.	1870	81-48-12
		EAGLE HAT WORKS.	1870	81-48-12
D	C.P.R.R Freight Depot	CENTRAL PACIFIC RAIL ROAD DEPOT.	1865	SHRA-E-3
		PACIFIC RAIL ROAD DEPOT.	1865	SHRA-D-4 68-110-210 SHRA-E-2 73-264-1
		C.P.R.R. FREIGHT OFFICE.	1866	73-264-1
E	California Steam Navigation shed	CALIFORNIA STEAM NAVIGATION CO'S STEAMERS FOR SAN FRANCISCO. (2 signs)	1865	SHRA-E-2 SHRA-D-4 73-264-1 68-110-210 68-110-141 SHRA-E-5
--	K Street C.S.N.C Passenger Loading bridge	STEAMERS CHYSOPHOLIS & YOSEMITE. CABIN $5. Deck $1.	1865	SHRA-E-2 73-264-1 68-110-210
N	C.S.N.C. Waterfront office	OFFICE CAL. PACIFIC STEAMERS.	1875	SHRA-F-2

D. SAMPLE SIGN SUBMITTALS

Each sign submittal must contain the following information:

- The name of the business
- The name of the owner
- The street address of the business
- A large scale drawing of the sign with dimensions
- A written description or a sketch of the sign's location on the building facade
- A sketch or a detailed written description of the sign's installation hardware

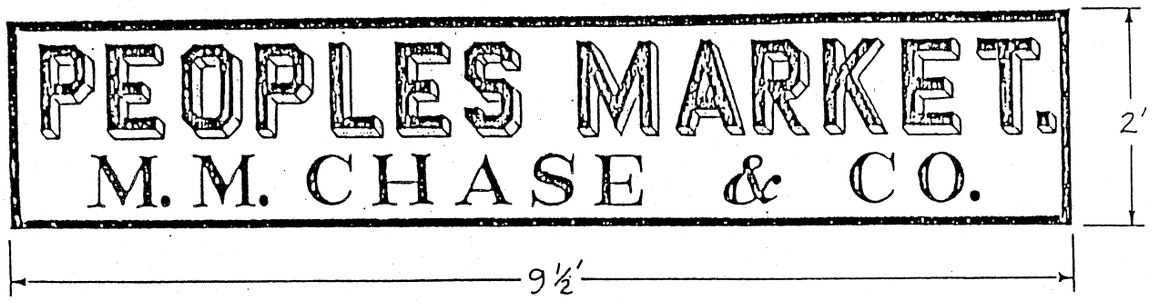
Two sample sign submittals are illustrated on the following pages.

Model Sign Submittal--1

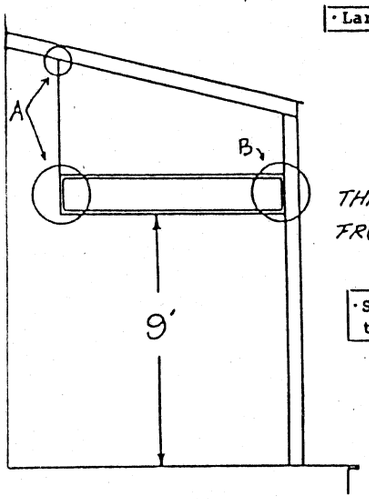
PEOPLES MARKET
M.M. CHASE & CO.
EL DORADO BLDG.
921 "2nd" St.
OLD SACRAMENTO

AUGUST 5, 1976

- Name of business
- Name of owner
- Street address of the business



- Large scale drawing of sign with dimensions



THIRD COLUMN
FROM ALLEY

- Sign location on the building facade

- Sample color chips

COLORS: (Paint brand name)

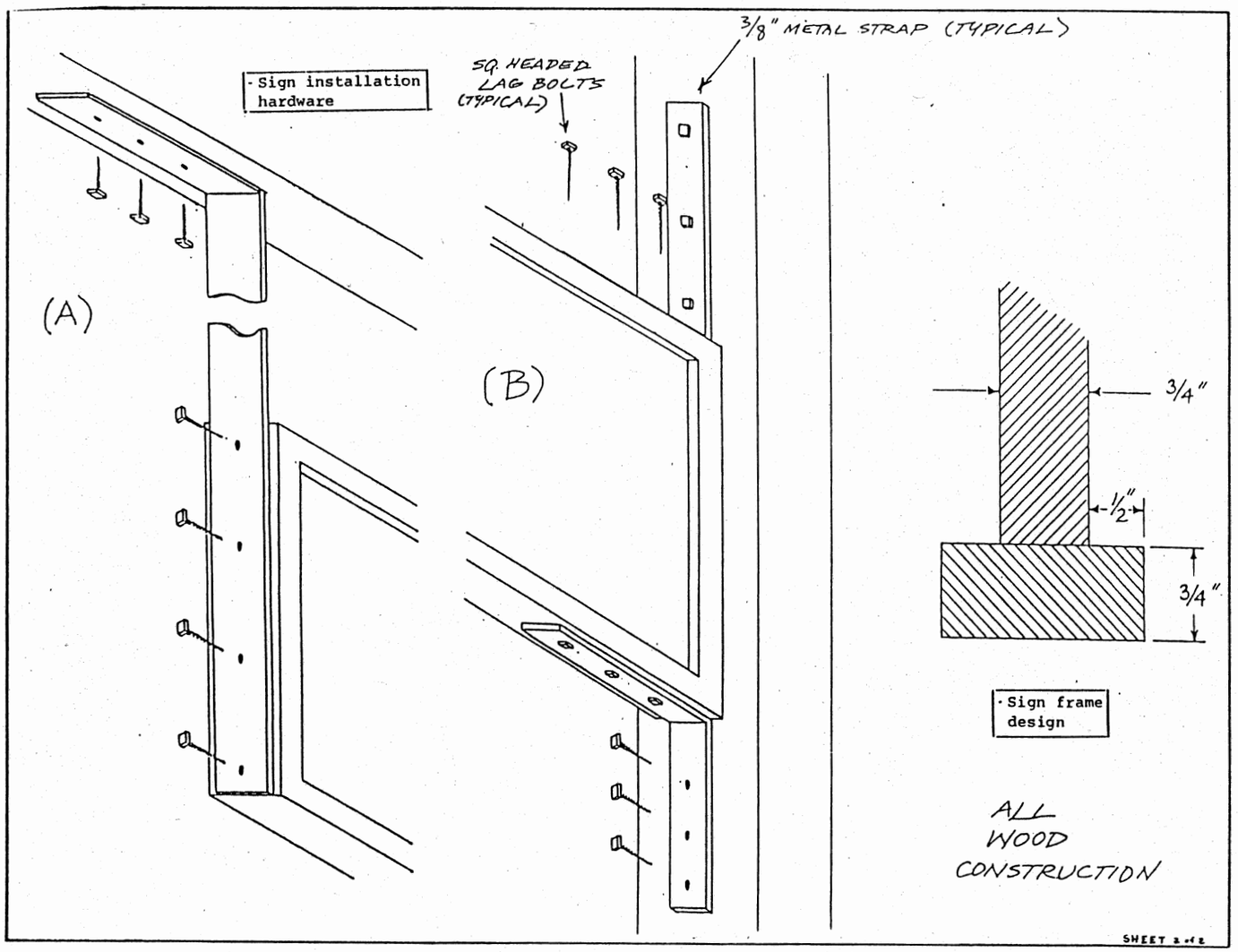
BACKGROUND: #64331

LETTERING: #68764

SHADOW IN LETTERING: #75373

FRAME: ULTRA BLACK

SHEET 1 of 2

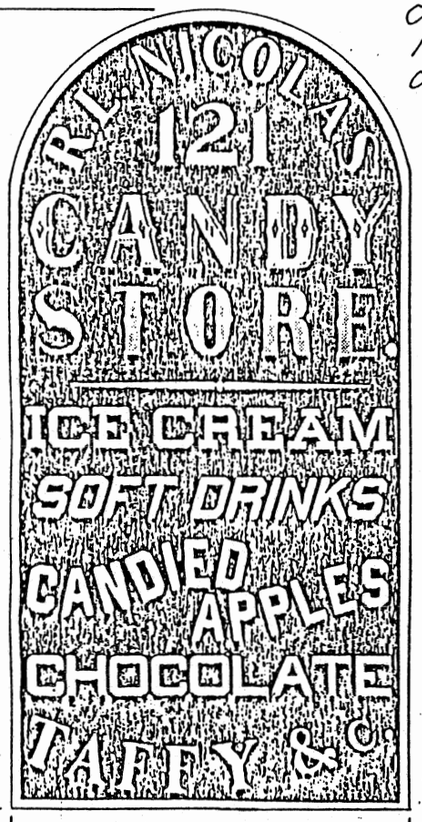

· Sign installation hardware
SQ. HEADED LAG BOLTS (TYPICAL)
3/8" METAL STRAP (TYPICAL)
(A)
(B)
3/4"
1/2"
3/4"
· Sign frame design
ALL WOOD CONSTRUCTION
SHEET 2 of 2

Model sign submittal--2

SIGN SUBMITTAL for: R.L. NICOLAS CANDY STORE
OVERTON REED BLDG.
121 "I" ST.
OLD SACRAMENTO

JANUARY 18, 1977

- Name of business
- Name of owner
- Street address of the business



- Sample color chips

COLORS: (Paint brand name)

BACKGROUND: BROWNSTONE (UC.B) H1132.H

LETTERING, ACCENTS & FRAME: CHATEAU BEIGE (1) B68B

PUEBLO BROWN (1) L 297B

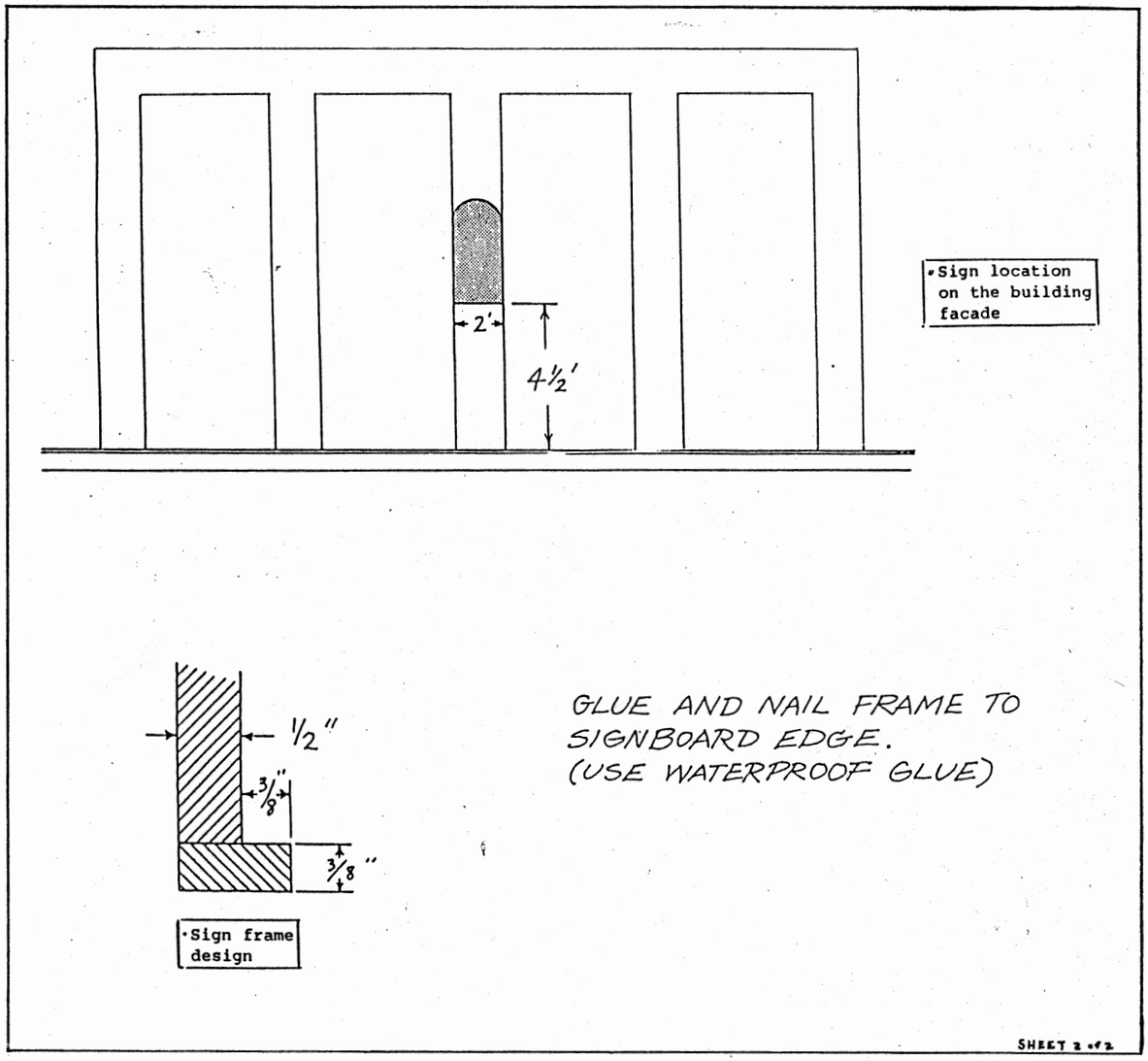
- Large scale drawing of sign with dimension

- Description of sign installation hardware

ALL WOOD CONSTRUCTION

THE SIGN IS BOLTED TO THE WALL WITH FOUR SQUARE-HEADED BOLTS

SHEET 1 of 2


2'
4½'
•Sign location on the building facade
½"
3/8"
3/8"
•Sign frame design
GLUE AND NAIL FRAME TO SIGNBOARD EDGE.
(USE WATERPROOF GLUE)
SHEET 2 of 2

E. SELECTED GLOSSARY

CANOPY, CANOPY STRUCTURE-- A weather protection appendage, commonly constructed of wood, extending over the entire width of the sidewalk. This structure usually includes columns and a sloping roof structure.

CHAMFER--(cham·fer) An obliquely angled, surface produced by bevelling an edge or corner, usually at a 45 degree angle, as at the four edges of a square wooden post.

FASCIA--(fas·cia) As used in this manual, the lowest horisontal trim piece or beam of a building's canopy or balcony structure. This occurs just below the roof or deck protection on the street side of the columns or posts. The lower edge of the fascia forms the boundary between historic and commercial signs. All modern-use commercial signs are required to be located below the fascia unless pole mounted.

FENESTRATION--(fen·es·tra·tion) The arrangement of windows and doors in a building; in an architectural composition, the design and proportion of windows as a decorative feature.

FLOURISH--A non-word design element which adds emphasis or clarification to a particular word or word grouping. As used in this manual, the primary function of a flourish is to separate message statements on a sign. Flourishes were also occasionally used to fill empty areas on a sign's layout. The design of flourishes are exemplified by ornamental rules.

INTERPRETIVE PERIOD--The historical period or span of years selected for interpretation in a restoration, historic display or historic district. For Old Sacramento, the interpretive period includes the years 1849 through 1875. All buildings, exterior features and landscaping should accurately reflect the design philosophy and styles of this period.

INTERIOR RELIEF LINES-- In sign painting, a line or a break

created in the thickness feature at projected points corresponding to corners of a letter. The use of blocking which contains interior relief lines adds to the illusion of a letter being raised above the surface--as if it were being viewed in perspective.

LETTER SHADING-- Differential toneality given to the sides and bottom of blocked lettering, as if illuminated by a directional light source, adding to the illusion that a sign text projects from the face of a signboard.

LETTER THICKNESS--A painted letter feature creating an artificially projected 3 dimensional appearance to a sign text from a two dimensional surface; also called blocking.

MULLION--A thin vertical wooden member dividing panes of a window.

PARAPET--(par·a·pet) That portion of any exterior wall, or fire wall which extends above the roof line. In Old Sacramento, this usually constitutes the uppermost portion of a wall, generally topped by a projecting cap or other ornamental detail.

PILASTER--(pi·las·ter) An upright architectural member that is rectangular in plan and is structurally a pier but architecturally treated as a column, usually with a capital, shaft and base. Pilasters generally project one-third of their width or less from the wall.

REVEAL-- A recessed area on a building's facade. In the 1850's and 1860's, solid recessed brick or plaster arches commonly occurred in structures above door openings on the first floor. Signs were often installed here.

TRANSOM-- A small horizontal window commonly occurring above a door or a main window.

UNILLUMINATED SIGN-- A sign not having an integral internal light sourse for illumination.

F. SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Listed below are publication which proved helpful in compiling the Old Sacramento Sign Guidelines. The primary focus of most of these works, however, is not exterior signs. Inclusion on the list was determined in many cases by the number and quality of illustrations showing outdoor advertising.

Illustration Source Code*	
LB+CC	Beebe, Lucius; and Clegg, Charles. San Francisco's Golden Era; A Picture Story of San Francisco Before the Fire. Howell-North, Berkeley, California, 1960.
MB	Black, Mary. Old New York in Early Photographs 1839-1914. Dover Publications, Inc. New York, New York, 1973.
—	Callingham, James. Sign Writing and Glass Embossing; A Complete Practical Illustrated Manual of the Art. Henry Carey Baird, Philadelphia, 1871 (Reprinted by American Life Books under the title How to Make Victorian Letters and Signs for Posters and Buildings, 1980.)
BC	Combs, Barry B. Westward to Promontory; Building the Union Pacific Across the Plains and Mountains; a pictorial documentary with text. Garland Books, 95 Madison Avenue, New York, 1969
KC	Current, Karen. Photographs and The Old West. Morgan Press, Inc. Dobbs Fenny, New York, 1978
DD	Digerness, David S. The Mineral Belt; Sundance Publication's, Ltd., Silverton, Colorado, 1977
GF	Fardon, G.R. San Francisco in the 1850's; 33 Photographic Views by G. R. Fardon. Dover Publications, Inc., New York, 1976
—	Harvey, Michael. Lettering Design; Form and Skill in the Design and Use of Letters. Barre Publishing, Barre, Massachusetts, Distributed by Crown Publishing, Inc., New York, 1976.

WH — Hawkins, William J. The Grand Era of Cast-Iron Architecture in Portland. Binford & Mort, Publishers, Portland, Oregon, 1976.

AH — Hayward, Arthur H. Colonial and Early American Lighting. Dover Publications, Inc. New York, New York, (1923) 1962.

CH — Hornung, Clarence P. Handbook of Early Advertising Art; Mainly from American Sources. 2-volumnes, Dover Publications, Inc., New York, 1953.

RL — Looney, Robert F. Old Philadelphia in Early Photographs 1839-1914. Dover Publications, Inc. New York, 1976.

TM — Managan, Terry Wm. Colorado on Glass; Colorado's First Half Century as Seen by the Camera. Sundance Limited, Denver, Colorado, 1975.

LM+KV — Mayer, Lynne Rhodes; and Vose, Kenneth E. Makin' Tracks; The Story of the Transcontinental Railroad in the Pictures and Words of the Men Who Were There. Praeger Publishers, New York, 1975

AN+JH — Neasham, V. Aubrey; and Henley, James E. The City of the Plain; Sacramento in the Nineteeth Century. Janice A. Woodruff, Editor. Published by the Sacramento Pioneer Foundation in cooperation with the Sacramento Historic Landmarks Commission, Sacramento, California, 1969.

BN — Newhall, Beaumont. The Daguerreotype in America. Dover Publications, Inc. New York, 1976.

DP — Phillips, David R. The Taming of the West; A Photographic Perspective. Henry Regnery Company, Chicago, 1974.

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SMHD — Graphics collection of the Sacramento Museum and History Division.

— — Illustrations cited by a building name or business name and/or city name and date are based on graphics in the author's collection.

*Graphic sources for illustrations or supporting evidence for guidelines. The numerals which follow the source code refer to page or plate numbers. Many common guideline elements have not been given specific citations. Multiple examples of these sign features can be found throughout the publications listed in the selected bibliography.

IX. CREDITS

Author and Editor	Stephen G. Helmich
Assistant Editors	Mary A. Helmich Walter P. Gray III
Illustrations	Laurena Cabañero Jess Grijalva Stephen G. Helmich
Cover Illustration	Laurena Cabañero
Alphabets	House of Signs
Production Assistance	Susan Loftus Maxine Garth Betty Ruiz Kay Herdman Shirley Reese Joan Dangermond Katherine Shaw Bill Gaylord Ed Beach

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